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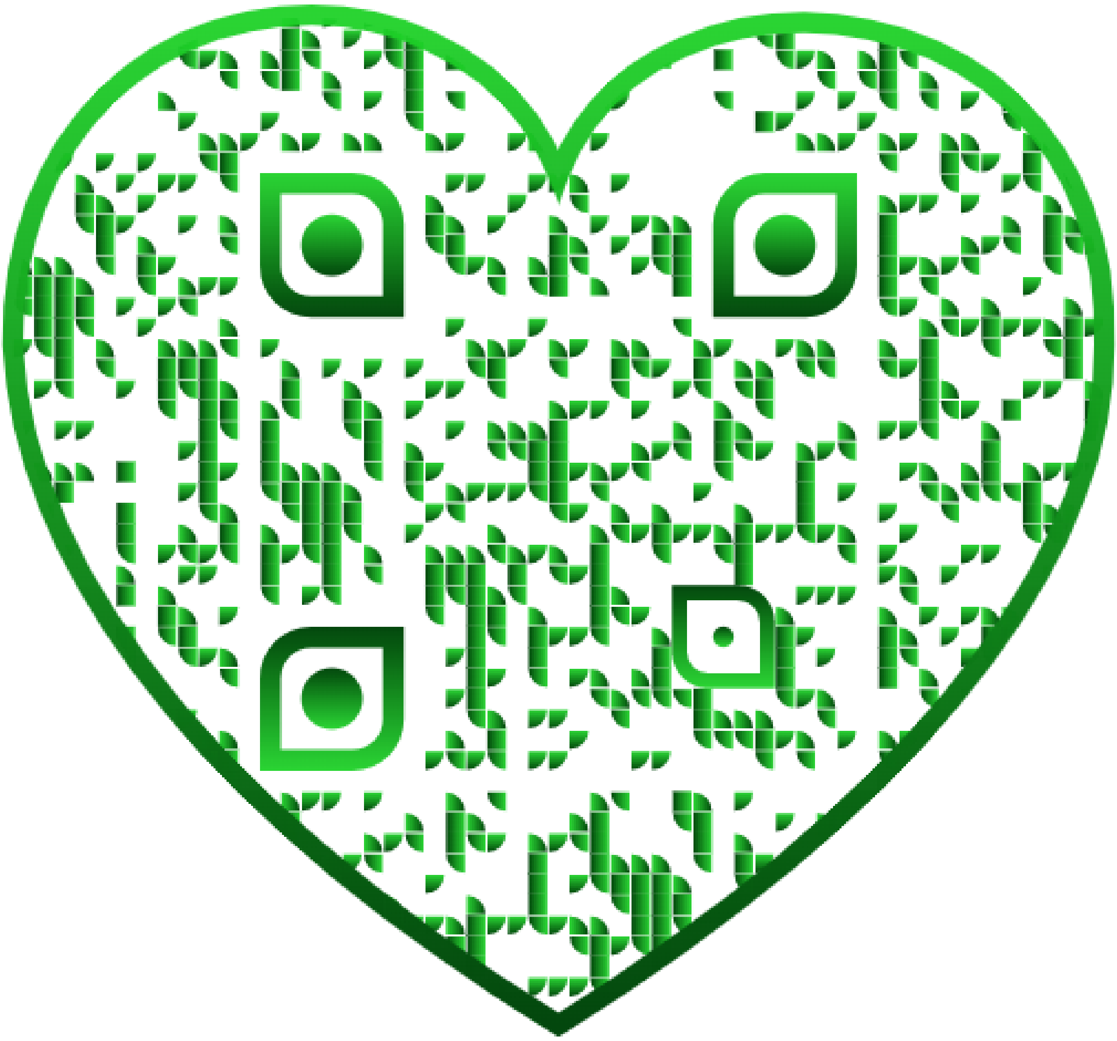
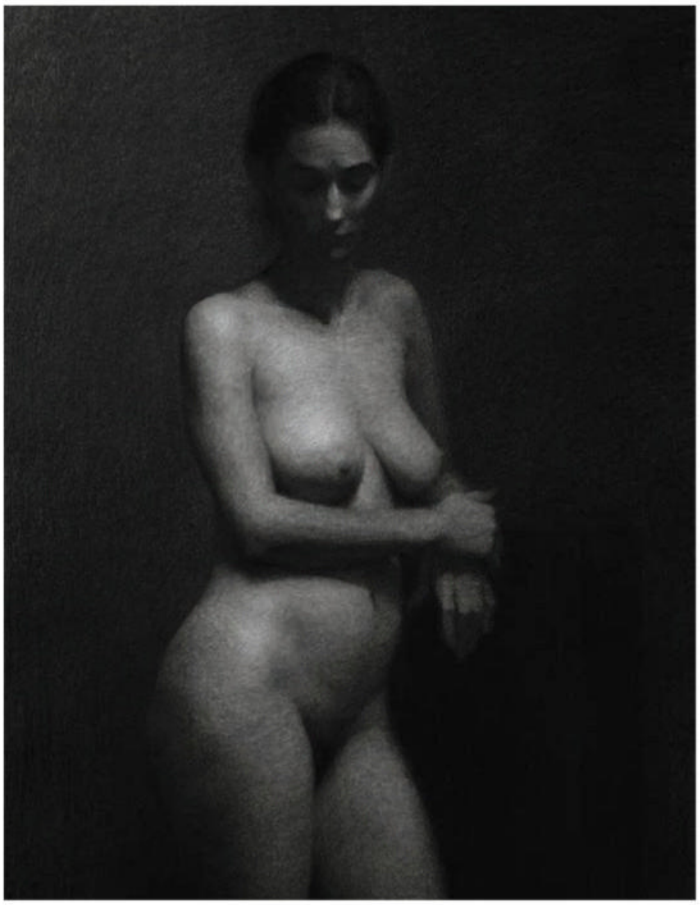


WORK FROM LIFE



Teresa – Life drawing, 50 x 95 cm, Nitram charcoal and white chalk on hand toned paper

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~ *Alexander Kai*

Alexander Kai, a young figurative artist from Wiltshire in the UK, specialises in portraiture. Having always been drawn to classical arts and portraiture, in 2022 Alexander studied with Nicholas Beer for a year at Sarum Studio, an atelier situated next to Salisbury Cathedral in England. He is now in his third year at The Florence Academy of Art in Italy, where he seeks to learn more about traditional skills and techniques of the Old Masters - contributing to the preservation of this valuable knowledge that has been passed down over generations. Alexander's work has been shown in galleries in Wiltshire and London and gained recognition in various exhibitions. He regularly takes commissions and holds local events. You can follow both his academic journey and work on his website **www.alexkaiart.com** and Instagram **@alexanderkaiart**.

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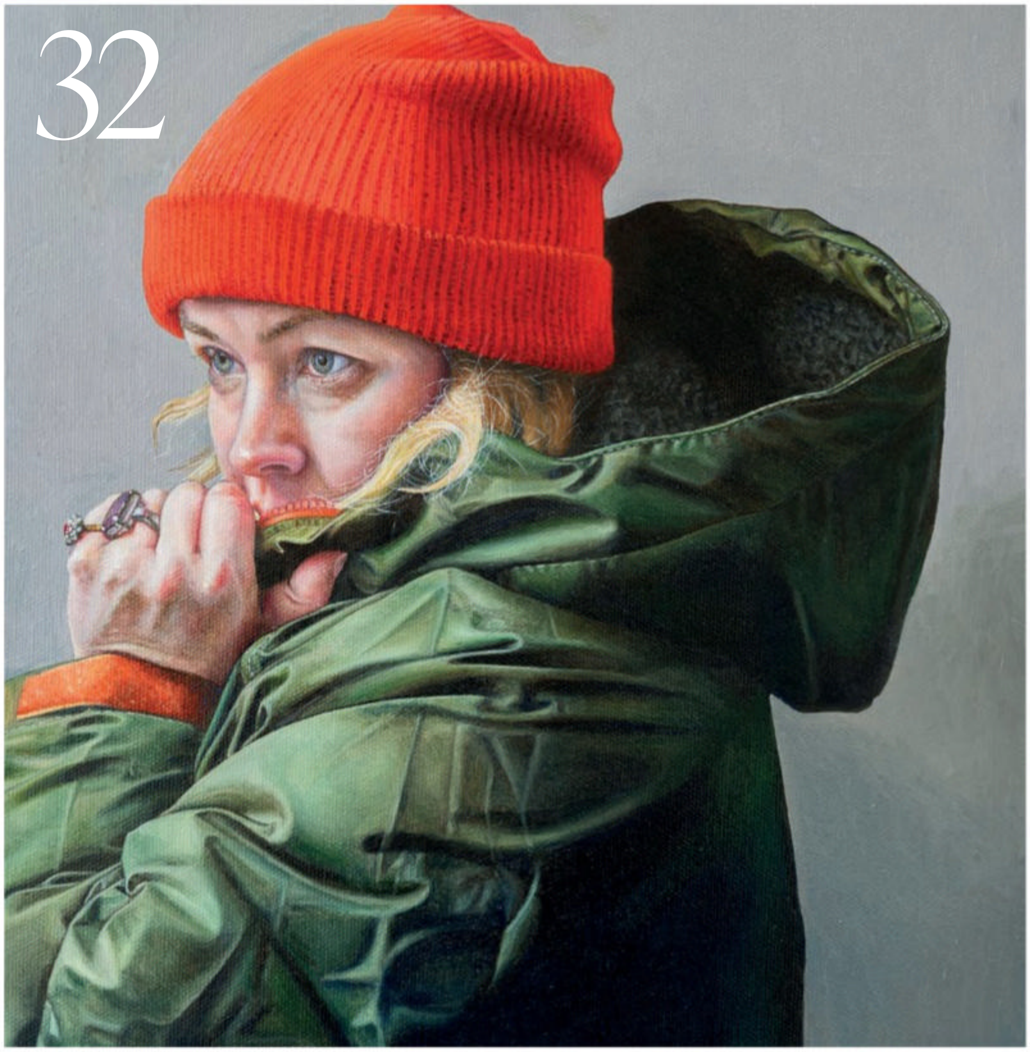

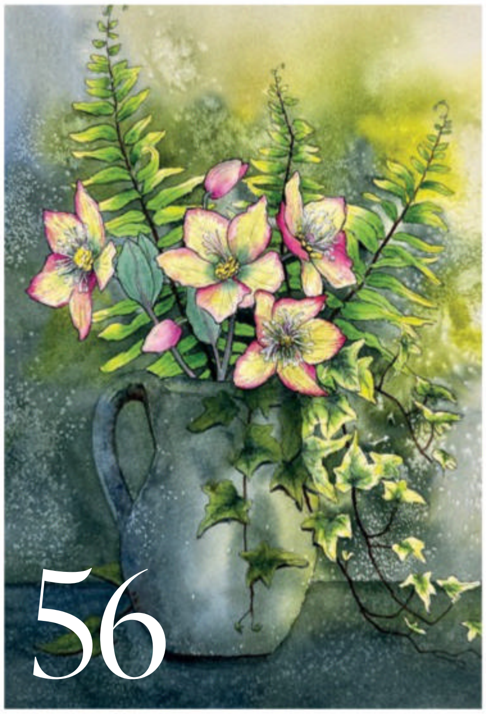

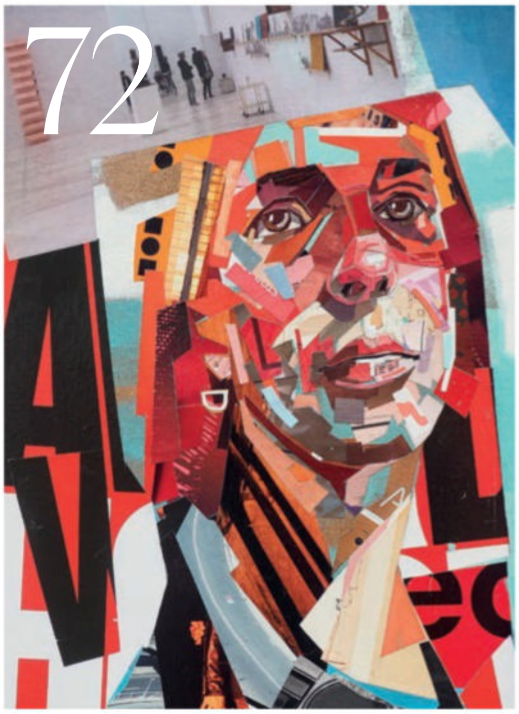

"True art is very powerful: the greatest paintings have souls."

So said Dame Tracey Emin, and her words feature – alongside other prominent female artists of the last 150 years – in an exclusive book extract in this month's issue. Our cover artist, Kathy Barker, will no doubt concur. She likes to capture the essence of a person by the tilt of a head or an impression only made by the sitter. Caroline Pool, who features in The Big Interview, likes to portray the older population, because their faces weather history and each has a story to tell: stories which should be celebrated. Reflecting all walks of life, after all, is what makes paintings powerful.

For practical features, Hashim Akib wraps up his brilliant six-part acrylic series with a demonstration on the beauty of working with flat colours, while watercolour favourite Grahame Booth shows you how to paint a snow scene *en plein air* (brrr!). For those of you who prefer working in the warmth, a mother and daughter duo show you how they paint winter hellebores, while Patrick Bremer encourages you to sit down with a pair of scissors and a pile of old magazines (hands off your past issues of *Artists & Illustrators*!) and create a collage. It looks like a lot of fun and how he 'paints' a portrait is nothing short of mesmerising.

Lastly, judging has now closed on this year's British Art Prize. The standard was impossibly high, making the judges' job beyond tough, but we now have our shortlist of 50 fabulous paintings. The overall winners will be revealed in the next issue but, for now, we'd like to get you voting for The People's Choice Award, the full details of which can be found on page 46. Over to you.

Niki Browes Editor

THIS MONTH'S COVER BY KATHY BARKER

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INTRODUCING

KATHY BARKER

This month's cover artist trained at Wimbledon School of Art in Fine Art Painting and Printmaking. She was awarded a studio at the Florence Trust, London, and is a full member of the Society of Women Artists. While portraiture lies at the heart of her work, she also paints landscapes and still life.

ANN FLYNN

Ann is a full-time professional painter. She has won a number of prizes for her work, most recently at the prestigious Mall Galleries. Alongside studio practice and commissions she exhibits in galleries across Ireland and has been selected for the RHA Dublin, the RUA Belfast, the RSMA and the ROI London.

LUKE WILLIAMS

Luke completed Art Foundation at Kingston University and a BA in Illustration at the University of the West of England. He trained and worked as an English teacher, before then training as a cheese maker. He reignited his love for art during Covid and now exhibits regularly.

CAROLINE POOL

After working in set design for feature films throughout her twenties, Caroline followed her instincts and returned to painting. Predominantly a portrait artist, her work addresses society's representation of the ageing population and celebrates their wealth of life experience through paint.

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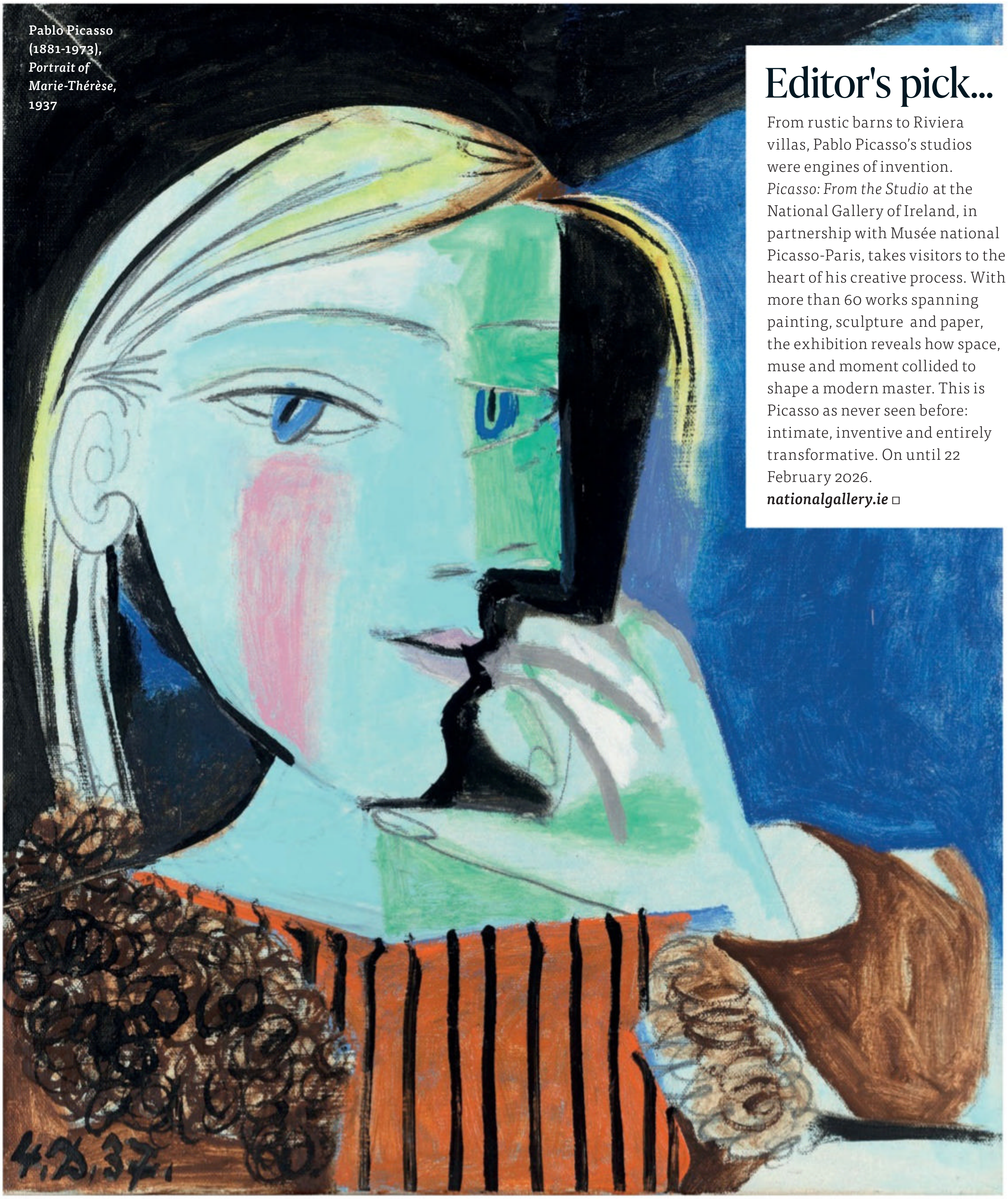
Sketchbook

TIPS • ADVICE • EXHIBITIONS • NEWS • REVIEWS **EDITED BY RAMSHA VISTRO**



Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), *Portrait of Marie-Thérèse,* 1937

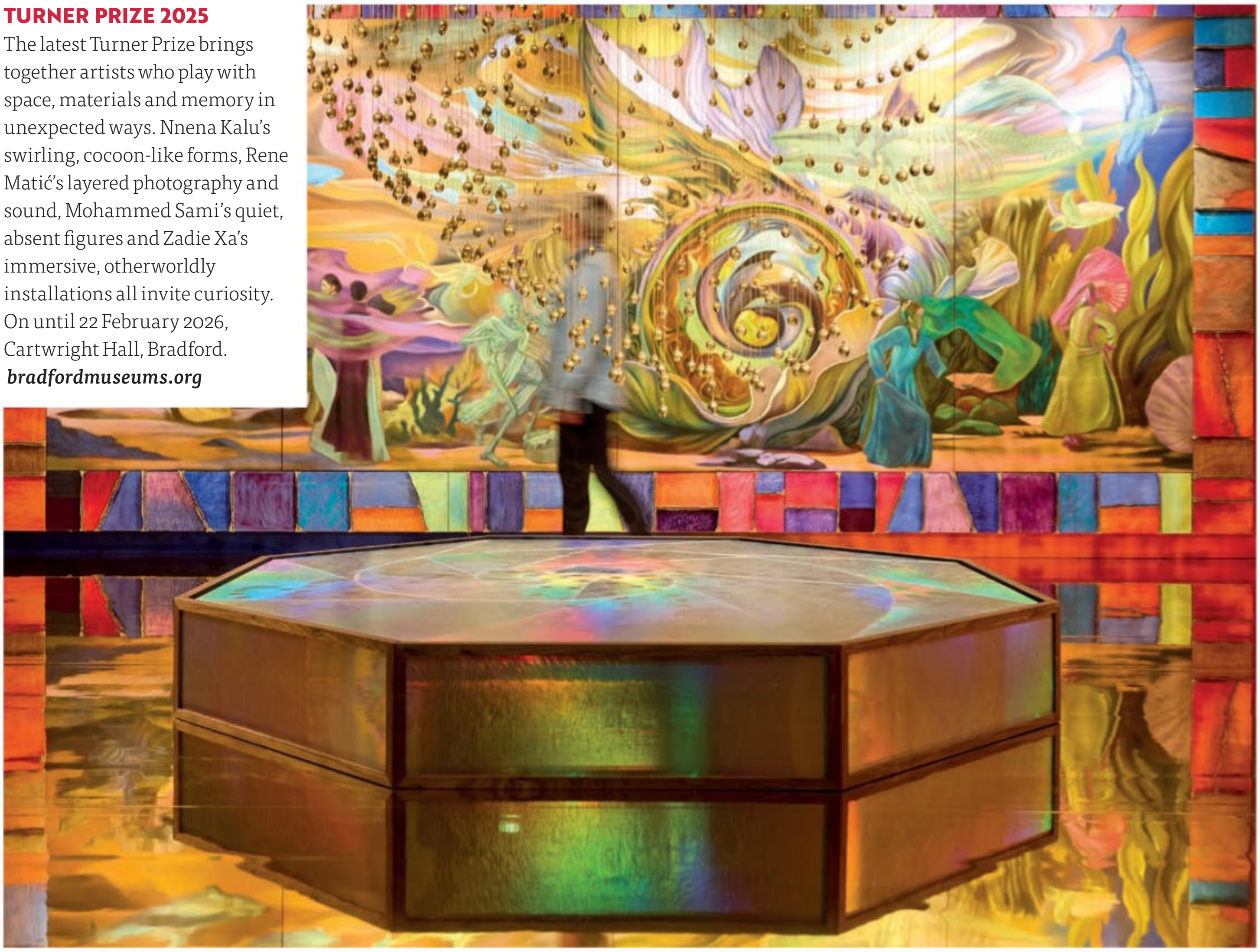
Editor's pick...

From rustic barns to Riviera villas, Pablo Picasso's studios were engines of invention. *Picasso: From the Studio* at the National Gallery of Ireland, in partnership with Musée national Picasso-Paris, takes visitors to the heart of his creative process. With more than 60 works spanning painting, sculpture and paper, the exhibition reveals how space, muse and moment collided to shape a modern master. This is Picasso as never seen before: intimate, inventive and entirely transformative. On until 22 February 2026. ***nationalgallery.ie*** □

MUSÉE NATIONAL PICASSO-PARIS © SUCCESSION PICASSO / DACS, LONDON 2025 © GRANDPALAISRMN (MUSEE NATIONAL PICASSO-PARIS) / ADRIEN DIDIERJEAN

TURNER PRIZE 2025

The latest Turner Prize brings together artists who play with space, materials and memory in unexpected ways. Nnena Kalu's swirling, cocoon-like forms, Rene Matić's layered photography and sound, Mohammed Sami's quiet, absent figures and Zadie Xa's immersive, otherworldly installations all invite curiosity. On until 22 February 2026, Cartwright Hall, Bradford.
bradfordmuseums.org



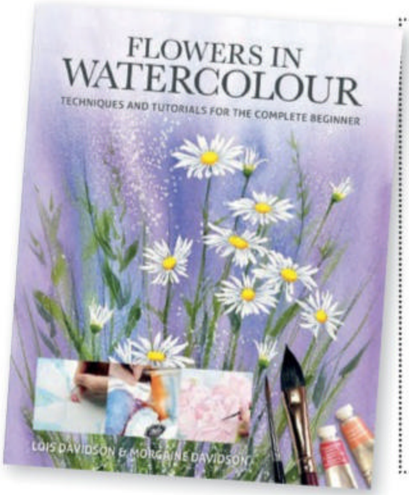
INSTALLATION VIEW OF ZADIE XA'S PRESENTATION AT THE TURNER PRIZE 2025, CARTWRIGHT HALL ART GALLERY. PHOTO © DAVID LEVENE

BOOK OF THE MONTH

FLOWERS IN WATERCOLOUR

Lois & Morgaine Davidson

Written by the creators of the hit YouTube channel Lois & Morgaine Davidson Art, this book teaches artists to capture the delicate beauty of blooms. From wildflowers to exotic garden favourites, this guide offers step-by-step instruction, essential techniques and inspiration, helping beginners and enthusiasts alike paint flowers with confidence and bring luminous watercolour compositions vividly to life.
GMC Publications, £9.99


FLOWERS IN WATERCOLOUR
TECHNIQUES AND TUTORIALS FOR THE COMPLETE BEGINNER
LOIS DAVIDSON & MORGAINE DAVIDSON

Join us online!

These pages are packed with artistic inspiration, but if you're after more, explore the fabulous *Artists & Illustrators* website. A go-to resource for artists across all disciplines, it offers a wealth of practical guides, exciting competitions and engaging interviews. Discover even more creative resources and inspiration. See you there.
artistsandillustrators.co.uk

THE DIARY

Open calls, prizes and artist opportunities

15 NOVEMBER

The Beyond Future Art Prize invites artists 15+ to explore the theme 'Thrive Together,' connect globally, and showcase their art internationally. Free entry.
beyondfuture.art

27 NOVEMBER

Submit your artwork to the 15th Annual Nature Online Art Competition for a chance at global exposure. Open to 2D and 3D artists worldwide, entry starting at $18.
lightspacetime.art

2 DECEMBER

Enter the 8th John Ruskin Prize, open to artists, designers and makers aged 18+ of any nationality. Total prize fund of £9,500. Entry from £15 per work.
ruskinprize.co.uk

5 DECEMBER

Join the Light & Shadow 2025 Art Competition to explore light and shadow and gain worldwide recognition. Open to artists everywhere, from $25 per entry.
fusionartps.com

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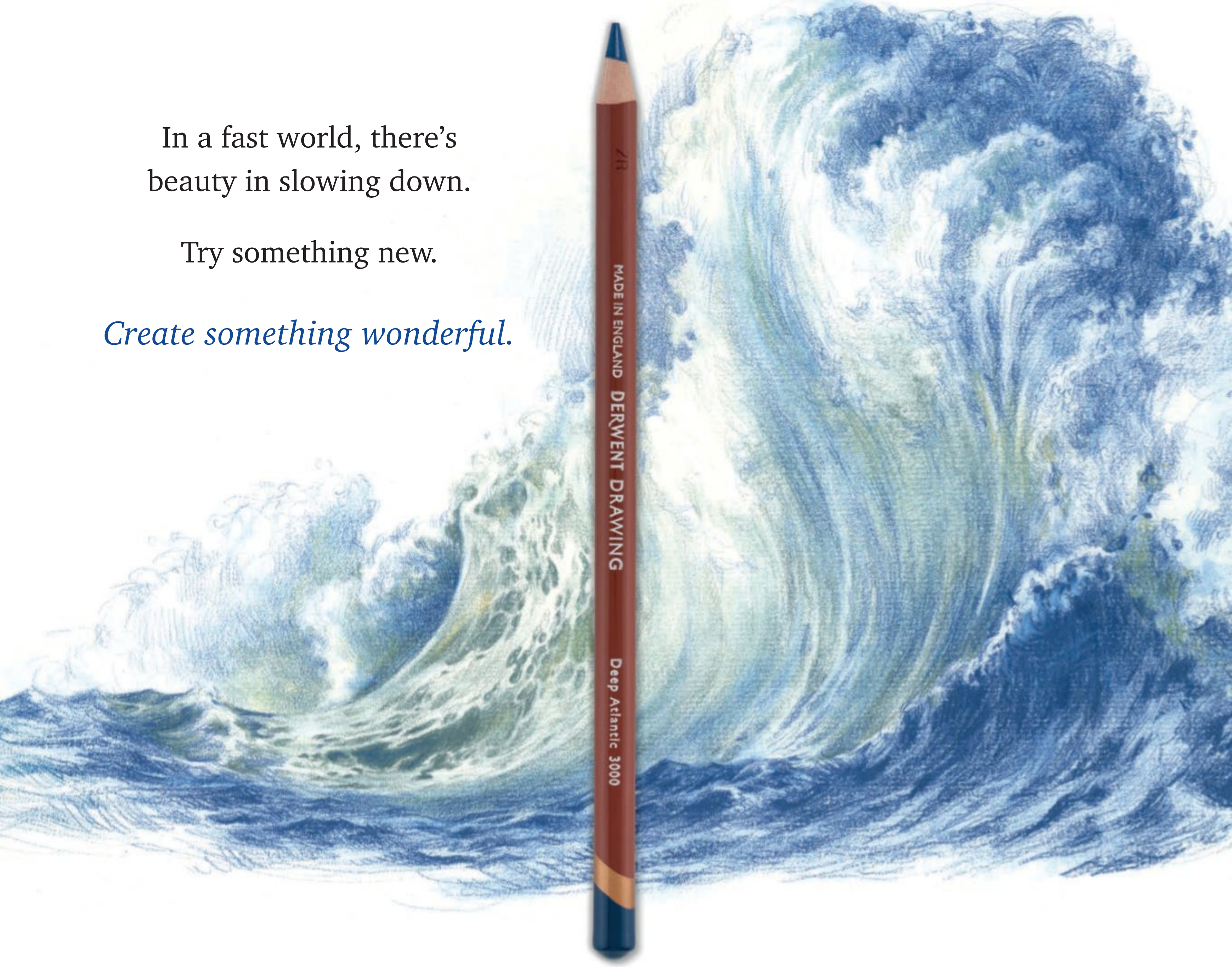
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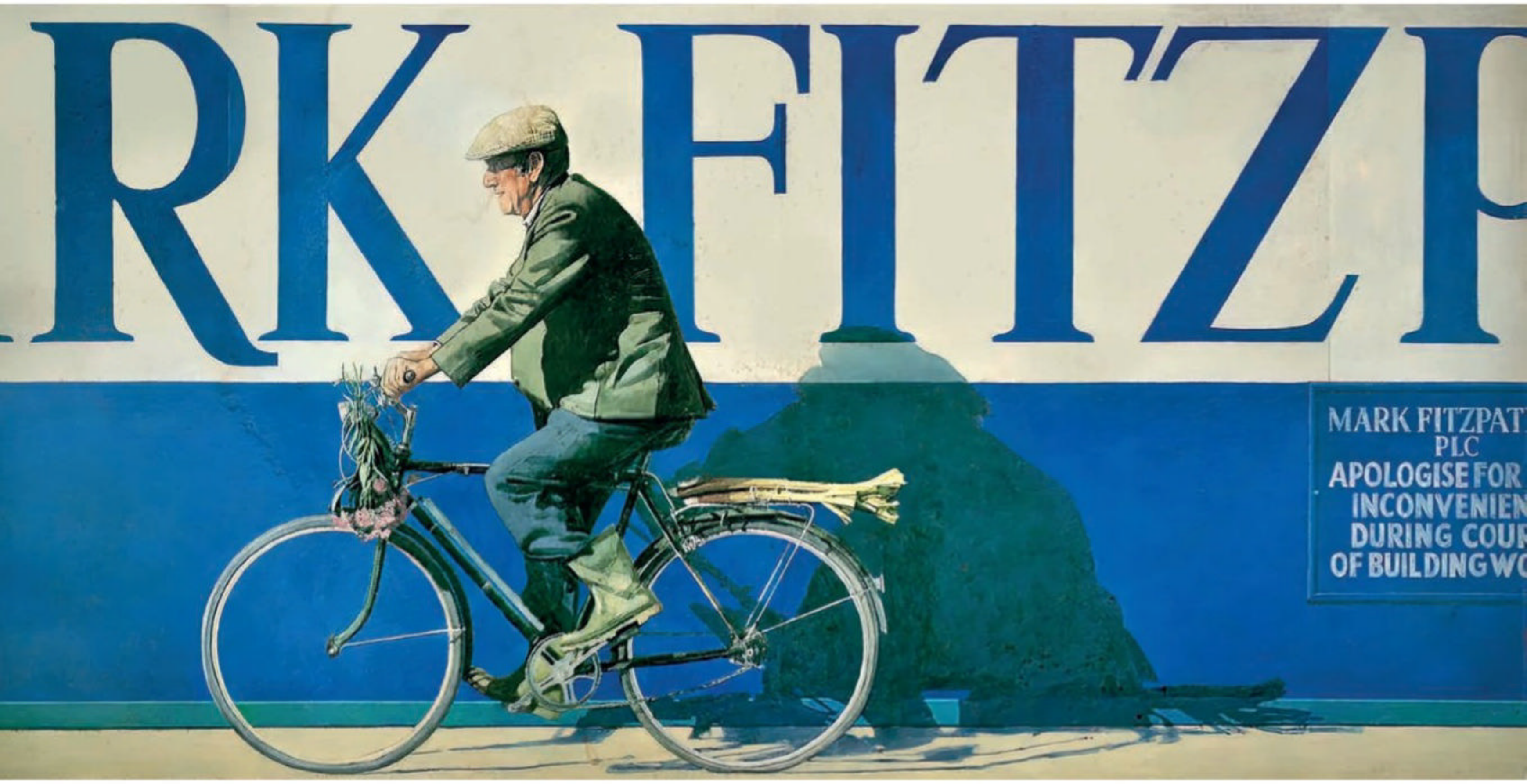


Be inspired...

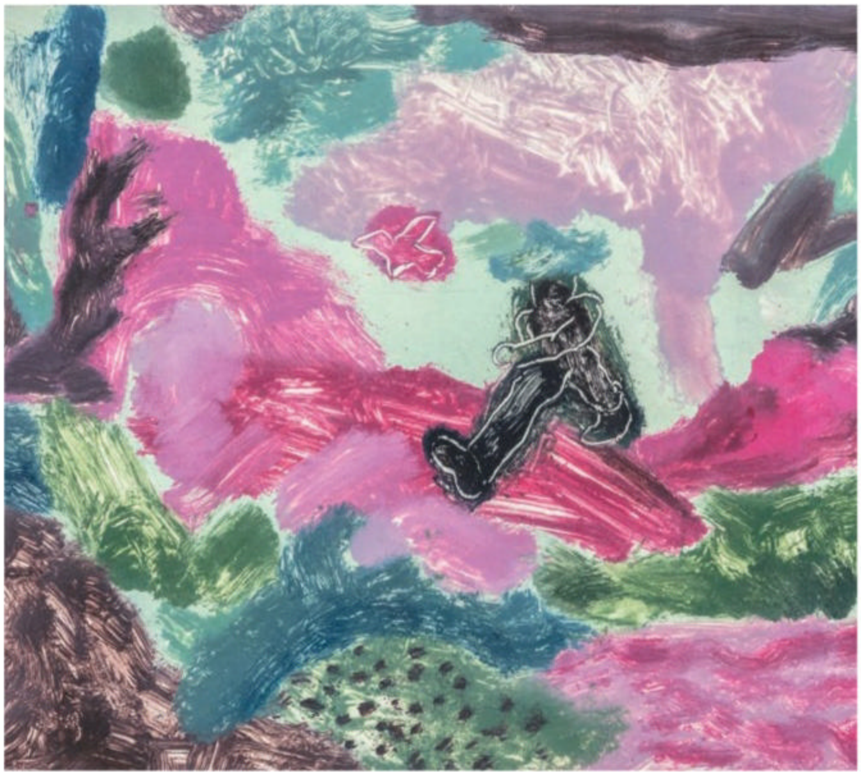
by the extraordinary vision of Bryan Organ, whose portraits of figures such as Prince Charles, Sir Harold Macmillan and Elton John reveal far more than mere likeness. Marking his 90th birthday, *Bryan Organ: Picturing People* traces the evolution of a painter who captures humanity through form, colour and composition. In an exclusive extract, art historian Sir Roy Strong reflects on being painted by Organ – an artist who distils a lifetime of observation into a single, unforgettable image. ***thamesandhudson.com***

ART AND ARTEFACTS

London-based artist Renee So brings a fresh, provocative perspective with *Commodities: Sculpture and Ceramics*. Inspired by Chinese history, tradition and the museum's own collection, she presents over 30 works. New pieces explore silk production, female agency and the commodification of Chinese artefacts. Visitors can also trace her creative process through sketchbooks and preparatory works, experiencing how history, myth and contemporary commentary converge in her multifaceted, deeply researched practice. ***comptonverney.org.uk***

OPIUM
YvesSaintLaurent
Snuff Schiaparelli

TOP: RENEE SO, 'OPIUM' SNUFF BOTTLE, 2024 GLAZED EARTHENWARE COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KATE MACGARRY PHOTOGRAPHY ANGUS MILL BOTTOM: RENEE SO, 'SNUFF BY SCHIAPARELLI' SNUFF BOTTLE, 2024 GLAZED EARTHENWARE COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KATE MACGARRY PHOTOGRAPHY ANGUS MILL

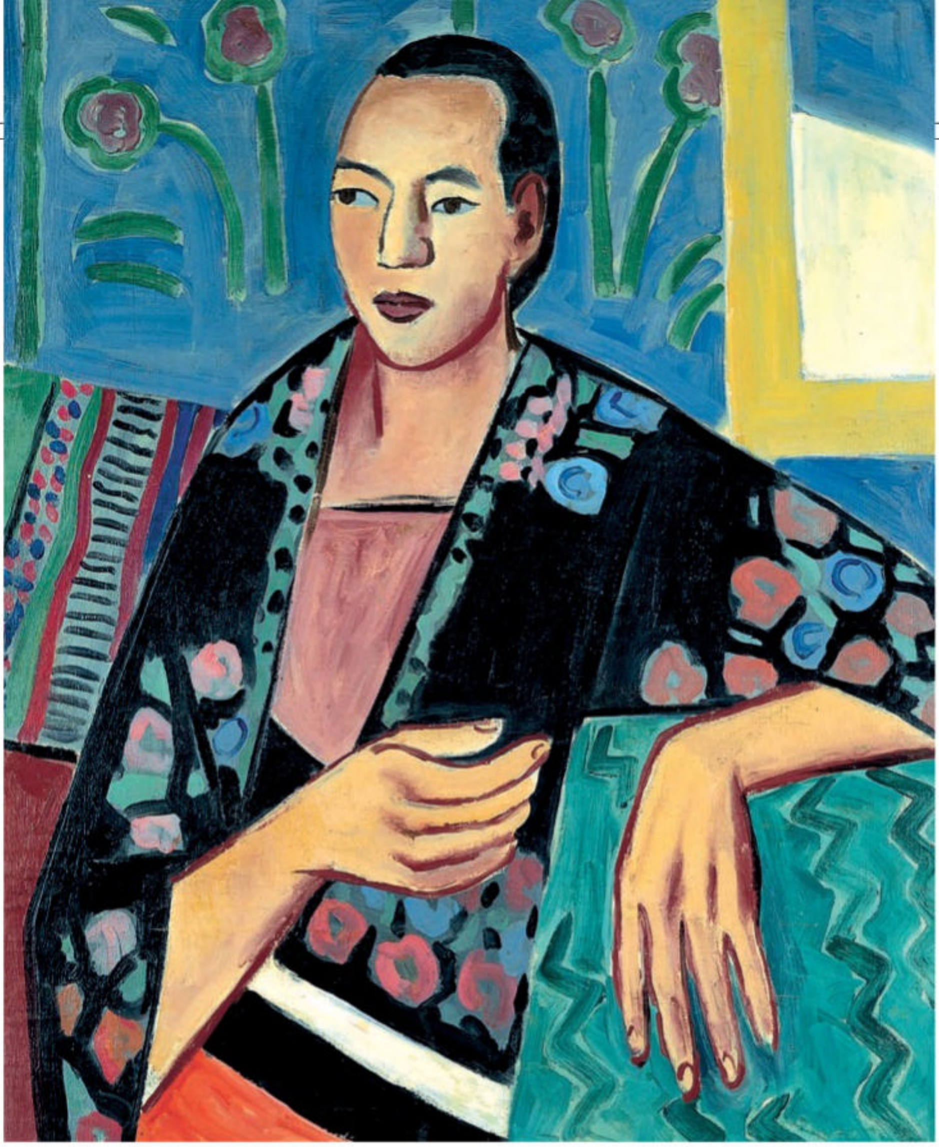


CHI PARK, WALK IN THE FOREST, MONOPRINT ON PAPER, 26X26CM

THE DRAWING YEAR 2025

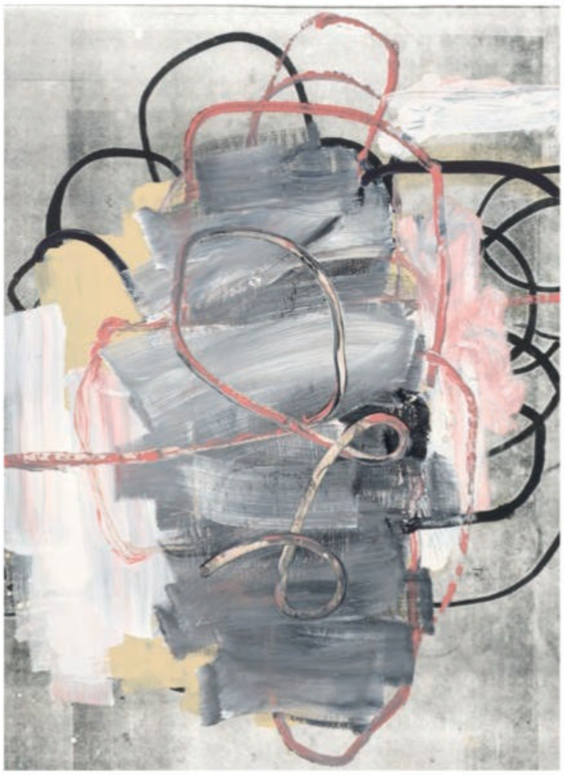
The Royal Drawing School's End of Year Exhibition offers a rare chance to see what emerges from a full-scholarship, intensive drawing programme. More than 500 works on paper – from prints to intricate observational studies – demonstrate the skill and experimentation of postgraduate students. It's an inspiring glimpse into the creative minds shaping contemporary drawing. For readers, wandering through the exhibition is a way to discover new talent, note fresh techniques and perhaps even take cues for your own artistic experiments. ***royaldrawingschool.org***

© BRYAN ORGAN. FITZPATRICK, 1990


© ADAGP / SDO WIFREDO LAM, SELF-PORTRAIT I, 1937, OIL ON CANVAS, 100X80CM

MULTICULTURAL VISION

Born in Cuba in 1902 to a Chinese father and African mother, Wifredo Lam merged European modernism with Afro-Caribbean visual traditions. Studying in Spain and Paris, he engaged with Picasso, Breton and surrealist circles, shaping his distinctive style. Returning to Cuba in 1940, Lam's art became a powerful response to social and political injustice. A new monograph, publishing 30 October, offers fresh insights into his symbolic, pictorial language and enduring influence on 20th-century art and politics. ***thamesandhudson.com***

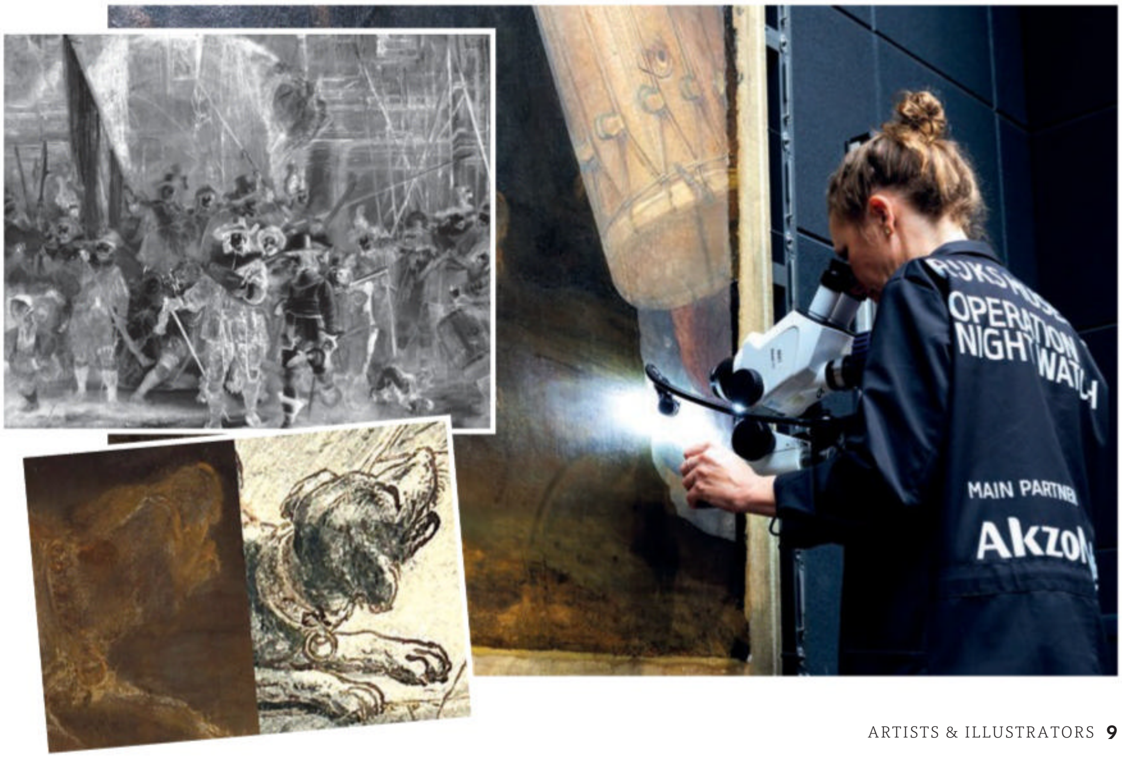

CHRISTOPHER WOOL, UNTITLED, 2018, ENAMEL, OIL, AND SILKSCREEN ON PAPER, 111.8 X 76.2CM © CHRISTOPHER WOOL. PHOTO: TIM NIGHSWANDER

Insight

Christopher Wool's latest London exhibition is his largest since 2004. The display shows how chance, gesture and layering can create striking effects. Paint, silkscreen and erasure mingle across surfaces, with repetition and scale generating subtle rhythm. Sculptural forms echo his painterly gestures and hints of the creative process remain visible. Why not try it yourself? Revisit old sketches, experiment with overpainting, or layer different media to uncover unexpected relationships and let your own work evolve in surprising ways. On until 19 December 2025 at Gagosian, Grosvenor Hill, W1K 3QD. ***gagosian.com***

NEW DISCOVERY

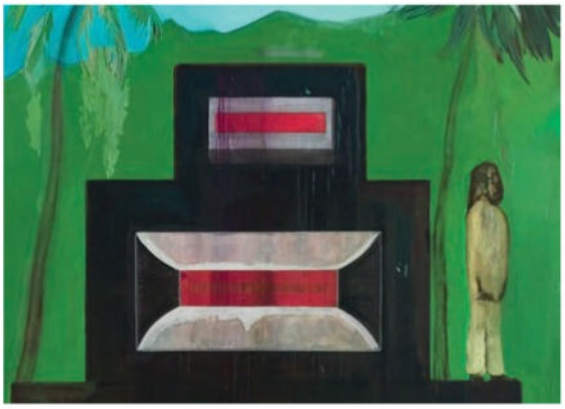
Researchers have uncovered the original 1619 drawing that inspired the barking dog in Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*. Made by Adriaen van de Venne, the sketch shares pose, head tilt and collar details with the famous painting. Underpainted studies show Rembrandt initially mirrored the dog even more closely. For art lovers, this highlights the value of revisiting references, observing subtle details and tracing how ideas evolve. Even centuries later, careful study can reveal surprising connections and creative insight. ***rijksmuseum.nl***



HOND, NACHTWACH, © RIJKSMUSEUM/KELLY SCHENK

Exhibitions

THE BEST ART SHOWS TO VISIT FROM THIS MONTH ONWARDS



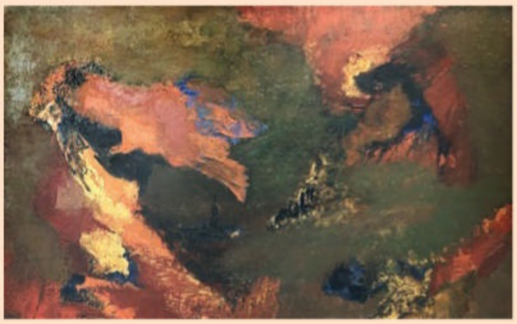
MARACAS, 2002-2008, OIL ON CANVAS, 290X190CM. © PETER DOIG. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SERPENTINE

HOUSE OF MUSIC

Until 8 February 2026

The House of Music display presents a series of recent paintings by Peter Doig, exploring the intersections of visual art and music. The works are shaped by Doig's long engagement with sound, from his years in Trinidad immersed in local sound culture, to his studio practice in London. The multi-sensory display invites reflection on music, collective experience and sound.

Serpentine South, London W2 3XA.
serpentinegalleries.org



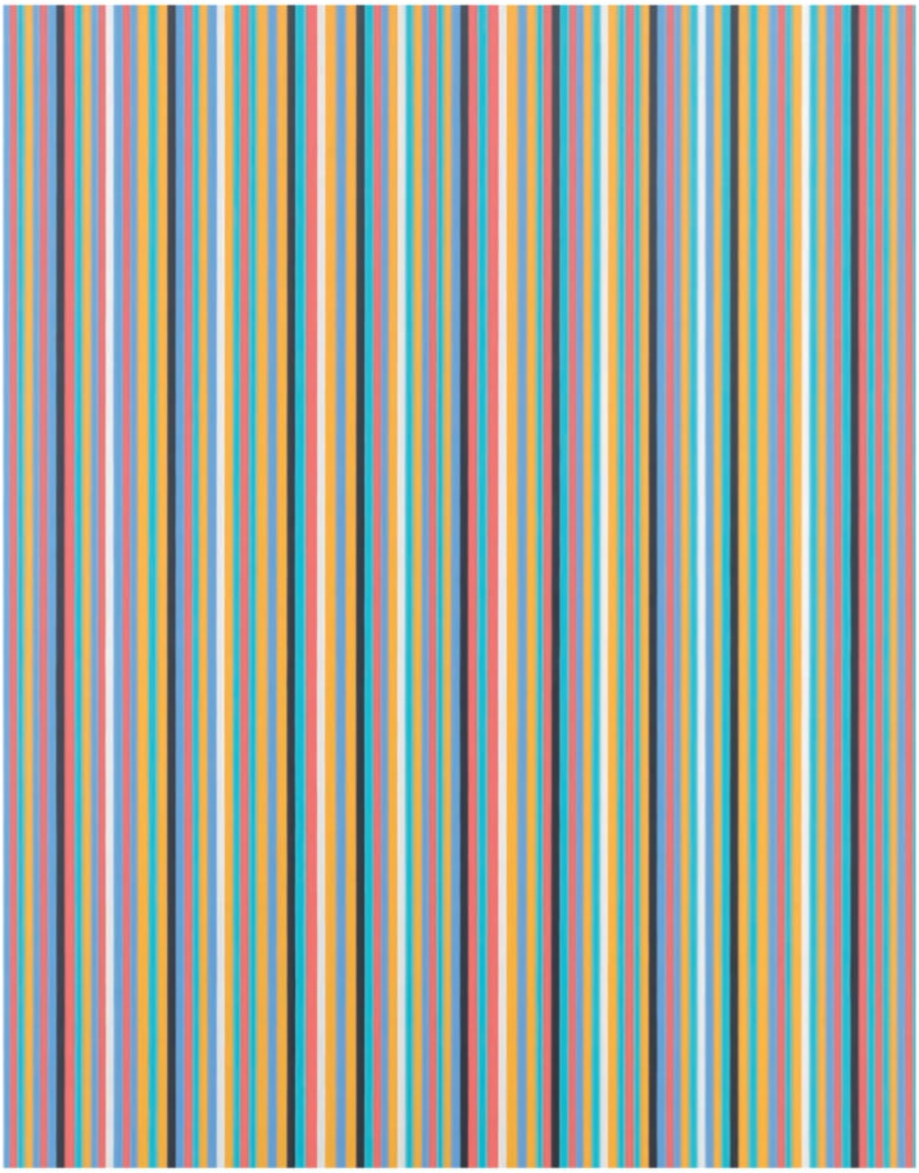
JANDYRA WATERS, UNTITLED, 1960S, OIL ON CANVAS, 70X100 CM. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST'S ESTATE AND GALERIA MAPA, SÃO PAULO

WE LOST LOTS OF BEAUTIFUL THINGS

Until 23 November 2025

This show brings together works by Jandyra Waters (1921–2025), a pioneer of Brazilian abstraction, and contemporary artist Theodore Ereira-Guyer (b. 1990). Though separated by decades, their practices are aligned by notions of time, scale and geographic resonance. This exhibition draws attention to the affinities between them at important moments in their careers and emphasises the value of works that chart risk and discovery.

Elizabeth Xi Bauer, London EC1R 4QE.
elizabethxibauer.com



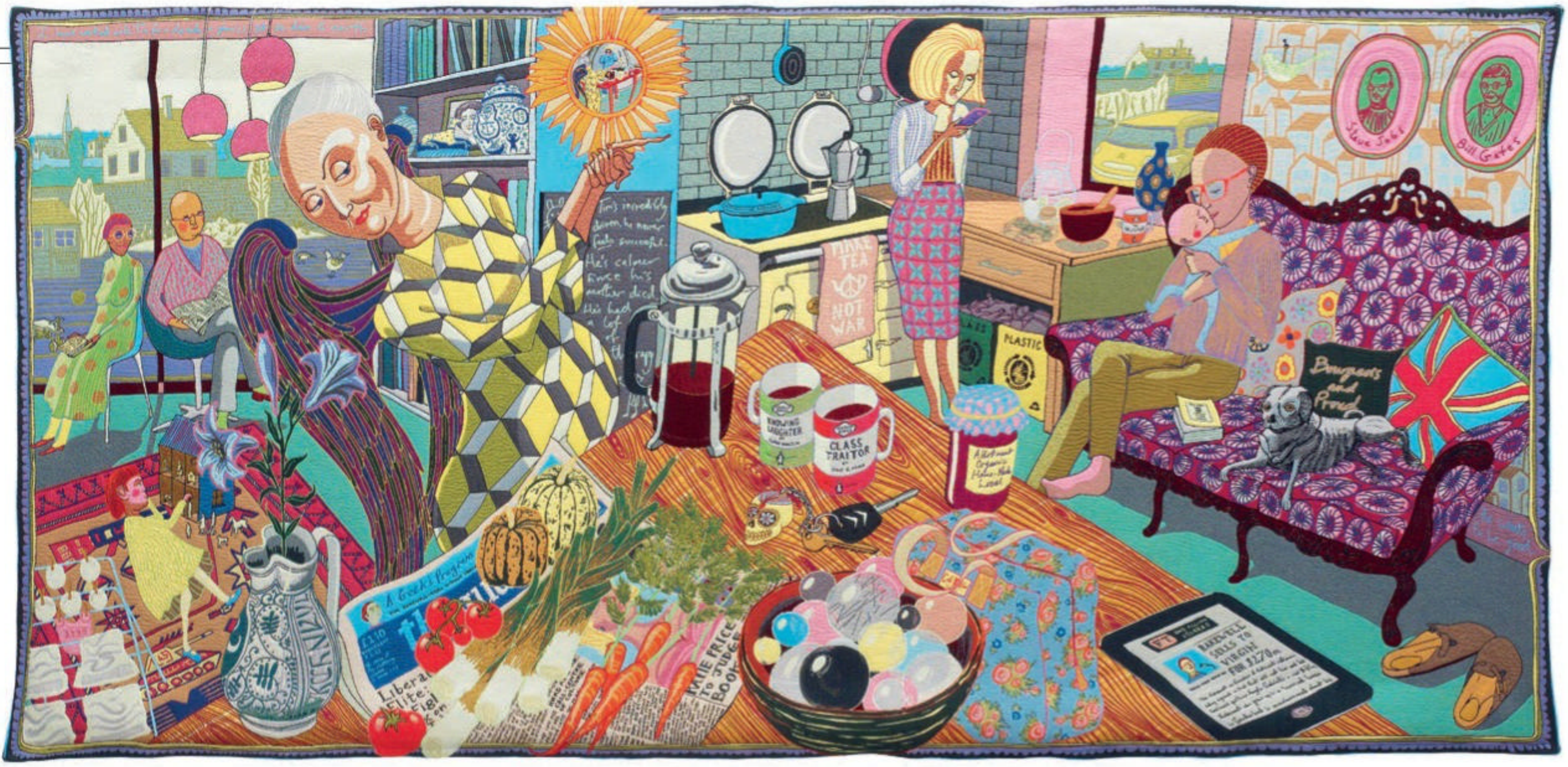
SILVERED PAINTING 2, 2023-1981, ACRYLIC ON LINEN, 204.4X159.8CM, PHOTO: PRUDENCE CUMING ASSOCIATES, LONDON © BRIDGET RILEY 2025. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

BRIDGET RILEY

22 November 2025 to 4 May 2026

A major exhibition conceived in close collaboration with the artist, this presentation explores Bridget Riley's continuing dialogue with the sensory experience of sight and her enduring connection with the natural world. Works from the 1960s are shown alongside her most recent paintings, wall works from the last decade, early figurative studies with line, tone and colour, together with preparatory drawings that reveal the centrality of drawing across her work. One of Britain's most influential artists, Riley has maintained a groundbreaking studio practice since the 1960s, gaining international recognition through The Responsive Eye at MoMA in 1965 and the International Prize for Painting at the Venice Biennale in 1968.

Turner Contemporary, Margate, CT9 1HG. turnercontemporary.org

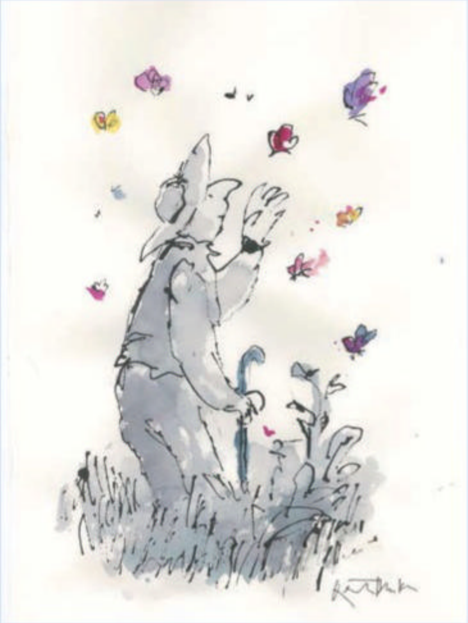


GRAYSON PERRY, THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN DEAL, 2012. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND VICTORIA MIRO © GRAYSON PERRY

REMEMBER RESPOND RESIST

Until 11 January 2026

This exhibition explores shared histories and experiences connecting Poland and the UK from World War II to the present day. Organised around the themes of memory, eresponse and resistance, the programme features work by 21 artists, including Henry Moore, Lubaina Himid, Simon Norfolk, Grayson Perry, Goshka Macuga and Honorata Martin. Sculptures, paintings, drawings, textiles, taxidermy and film examine personal and collective reactions to conflict, activism and social change, reflecting on migration, political upheaval and cross-cultural exchange. The exhibition also draws on The Box's archival collection to highlight historical connections between Plymouth and the Polish community, pushing dialogue and understanding between two nations. ***The Box, Plymouth, PL1 2AS. theboxplymouth.com***

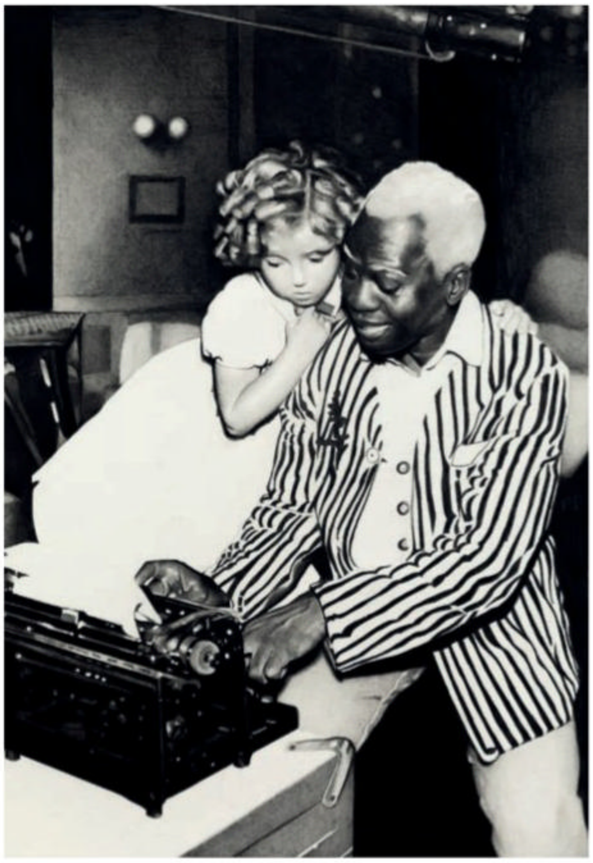


OUR FRIENDS IN THE COUNTRY #13, 2025. IMAGE© QUENTIN BLAKE

OUR FRIENDS IN THE COUNTRY

Until 4 January 2026

This exhibition presents recent work by Sir Quentin Blake, celebrating rural life and the bonds between people and animals in the countryside. Created in 2023, watercolour and ink scenes depict moments of comedy and interaction, from an elderly man chasing butterflies to a woman engaging with a curious duck. The works combine figures reflecting both Blake's enduring style and the context of Sherborne House, with its rich history of visitors including Charles Darwin and Charles Dickens. The show marks the first time these images have been shown together outside London. ***The Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3JG. thesherborne.com***



KRISTIAN EVJU, THE GARDEN VII, 2024, PENCIL ON PAPER, 34.5X26CM

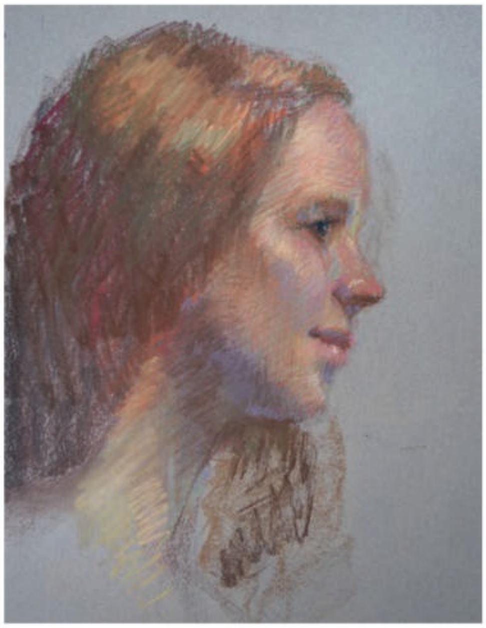
HINTERLANDS

Until 22 November 2025

This solo exhibition presents a series of works by Kristian Evju that explore surreal reimaginings of history, where the boundaries of time and place dissolve. Prompted by the question 'what if?', objects and fragments of history are extracted from their original contexts, cut apart and reassembled for viewers to interpret. The show invites reflection on memory, history and imagination without offering any definitive answers. ***Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London (Tower Bridge), 36 Tanner Street, London SE1 3LD. kristinhjellegjerde.com***

WIN In-person expert art classes with Ann Witheridge

Two winners will get the chance to have a private tutorial worth a total of £1,000 at **LONDON FINE ART STUDIOS**



London Fine Art Studios, located on Lavender Hill, is a well-respected institution known for its classical approach to art education. Founded by Ann Witheridge, a highly experienced artist and educator, the studio is dedicated to providing a thoughtful, immersive learning experience for those looking to develop their skills.

This month, we are delighted to offer an exclusive prize draw: two winners will join Ann Witheridge for a five-hour, privately tutored portrait class at the studio. This in-person session will guide you through essential principles of portrait painting, including mass, value, composition and colour. Participants will be able to work in their chosen medium, with personalised instruction to suit their individual skill levels.

The studio's emphasis on classical techniques has produced numerous successful artists, many of whom have gained recognition both nationally and internationally. Basic drawing materials are provided and refreshments will be served.
londonfineartstudios.com

THE PRIZE

Two winners, chosen at random, will each receive a place worth £500 in a privately tutored group portrait class with artist Ann Witheridge

HOW TO ENTER

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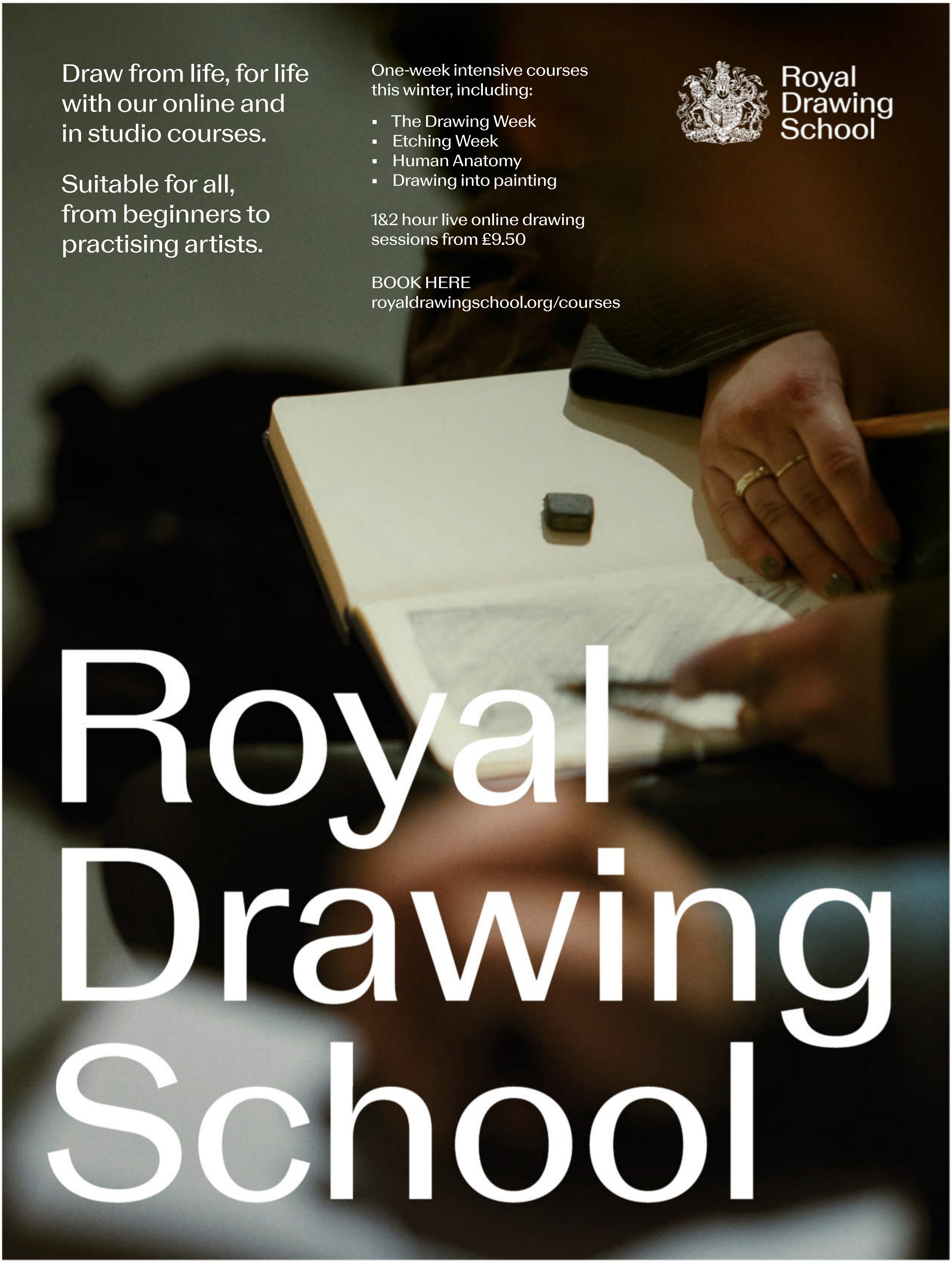

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This month's spotlight on a British Art Club member

We present...

CAT CROXFORD

This artist transforms ancient UK woodlands into story-filled treescapes

Cat Croxford found her voice as a painter in the trees. A self-taught artist, she starts every canvas with black, and from that darkness emerge luminous treescapes built with broken brushstrokes. "The black represents darkness, the perfect starting point for a story," she explains. "Each layer builds the narrative." Cat's distinctive style has taken her from Berkshire's beech woods to Sky Arts' Landscape Artist of the Year.

Her fascination with trees began in childhood. Frequent house moves always placed her near the woods. "We'd play act in the woods – anything from Robin Hood outlaws to woodland pirates! The woods always felt like a magical and ancient place, as if the ghosts of past dwellers wandered among the trees. I felt wild and free to be amongst the trees, and it was excitingly easy to get lost in there," she recalls.

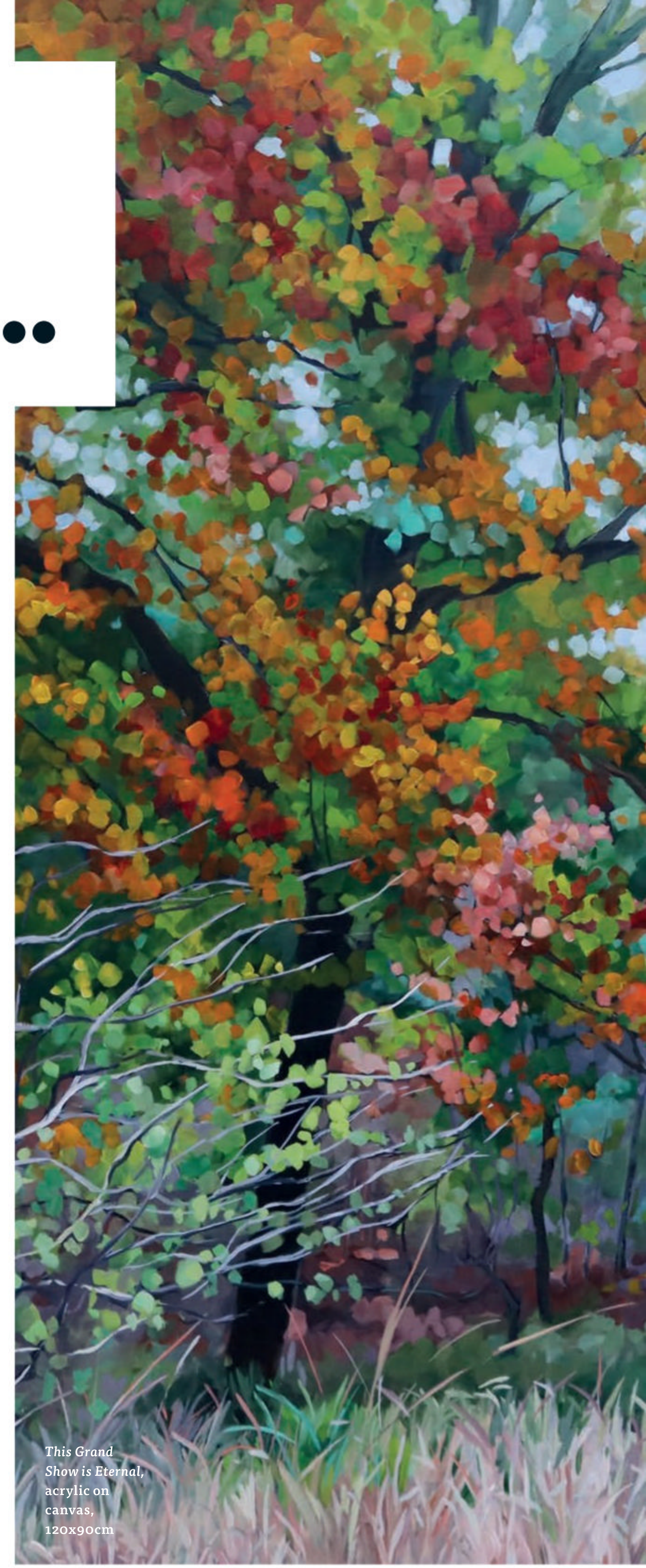
Without art school training, Cat admits her biggest hurdles were "perception and confidence." Fortunately, her mother – also an artist – encouraged her to paint. "Initially, I worried that lacking a formal art education might limit my opportunities or leave gaps in my practice," she says. "I learnt that loving the paintings that I create and embracing constructive criticism while maintaining self-belief, fosters integrity. This mindset has been key to overcoming doubts and refining my skills."

History is as important to her as light and colour. "I am fascinated by the history of the woodlands in the UK, from the myths and magic started by the ancients, to the practical reliance on woods for materials, fuel and food by Romans, Saxons and later cultures," Cat muses.

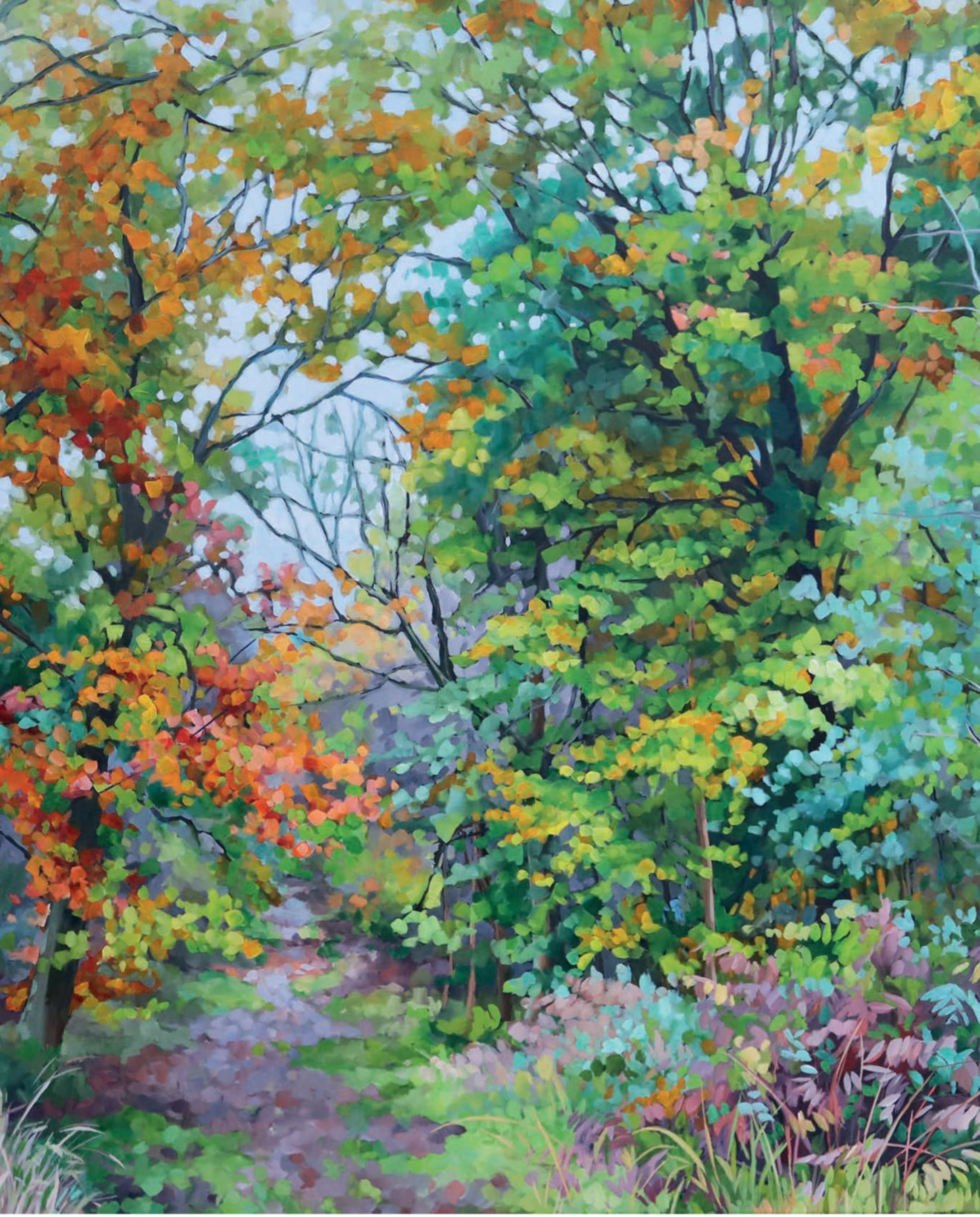
Recognition has followed. Along with appearing on *Sky Arts' Landscape Artist of the Year*, Cat has filmed a Masterclass episode showcasing her process and was a finalist in The British Art Prize. She has also exhibited at the Mall Galleries and Affordable Art Fairs in Battersea and Hampstead. Her work is now represented by galleries in Bristol, Oxford and Reading, and is held in collections across Europe, the US and New Zealand.

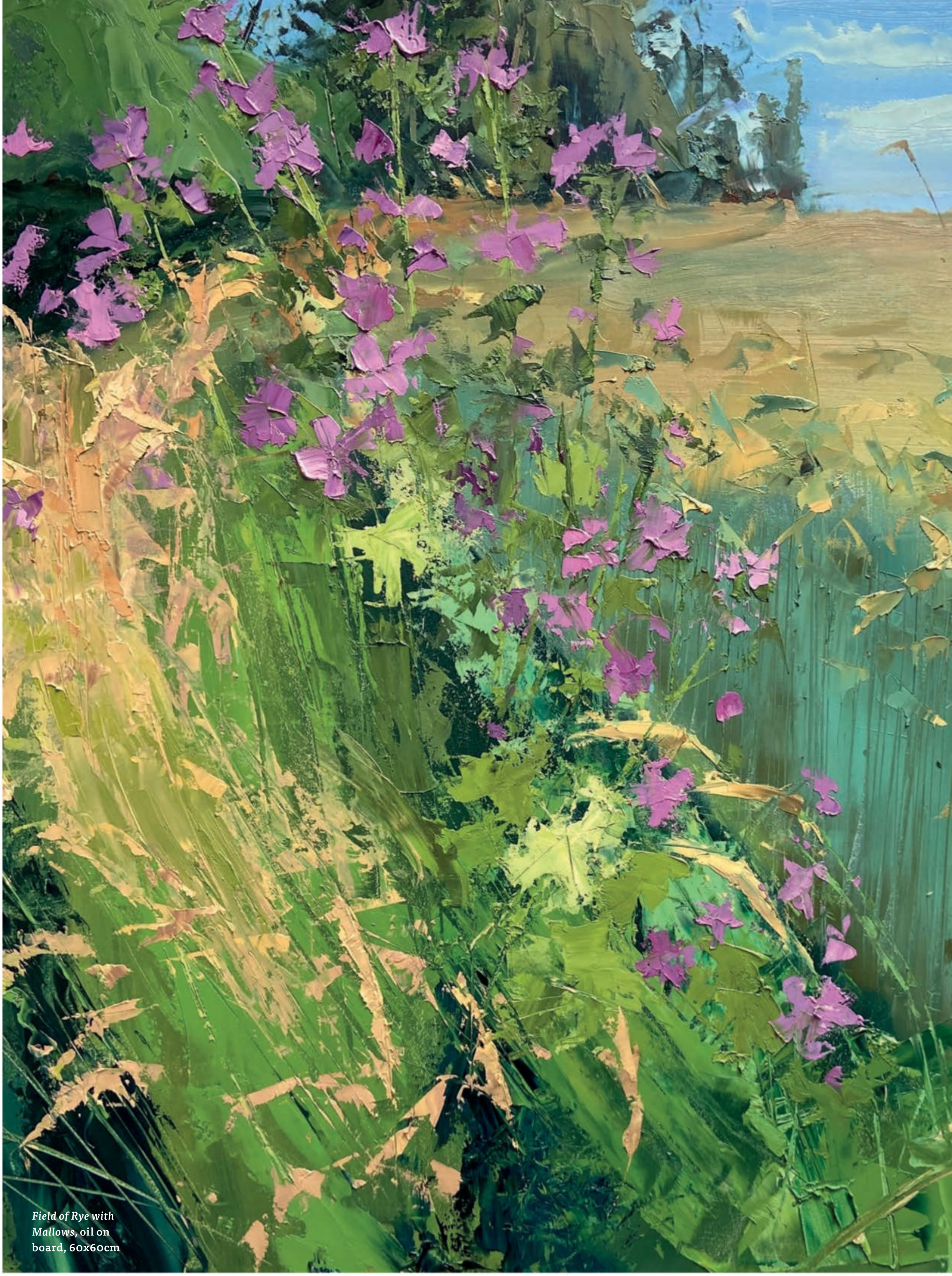
Her layered brushstrokes create depth and texture. "A vibrant palette heightens the woodland experience, while varied brushstroke scales create layered illusions of movement and depth. Close-up, the marks reveal texture; from afar, they form a cohesive whole." The aim, she adds, is simple: "I want viewers to feel immersed, communing with the painting as a living, breathing entity."

britishartclub.co.uk/profile/catcroxford □

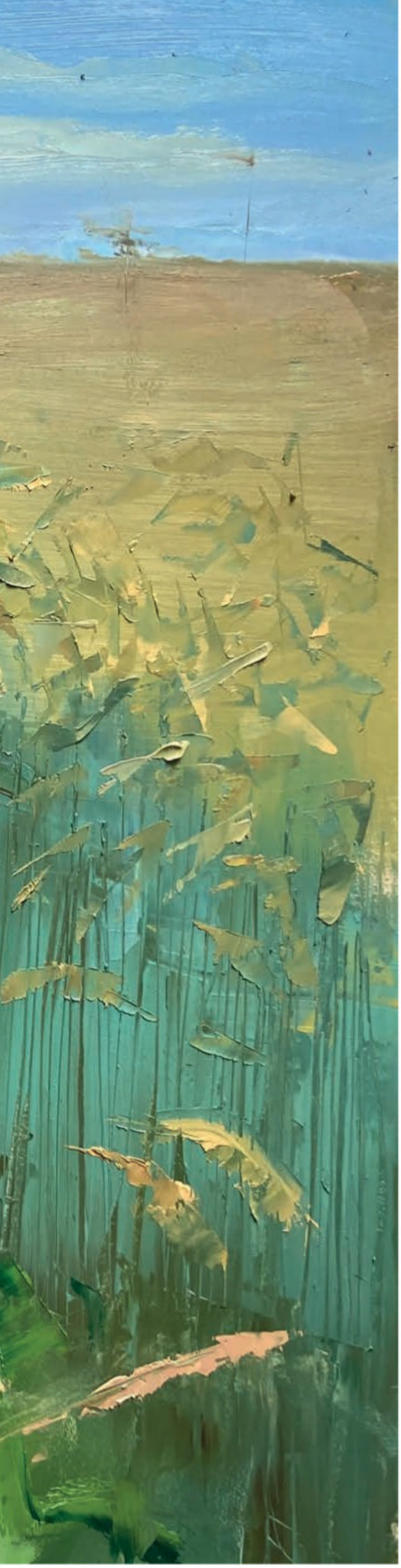


This Grand Show is Eternal, acrylic on canvas, 120x90cm



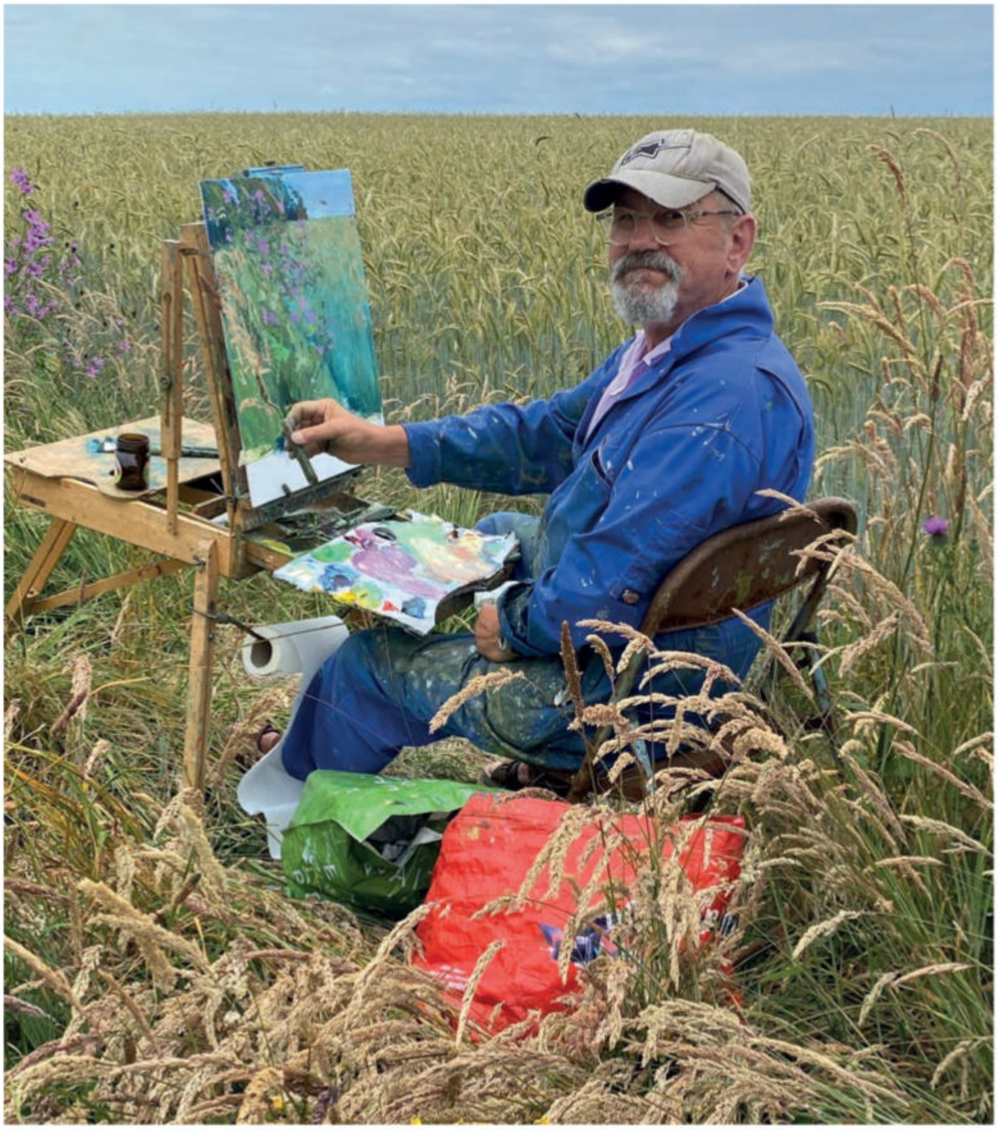


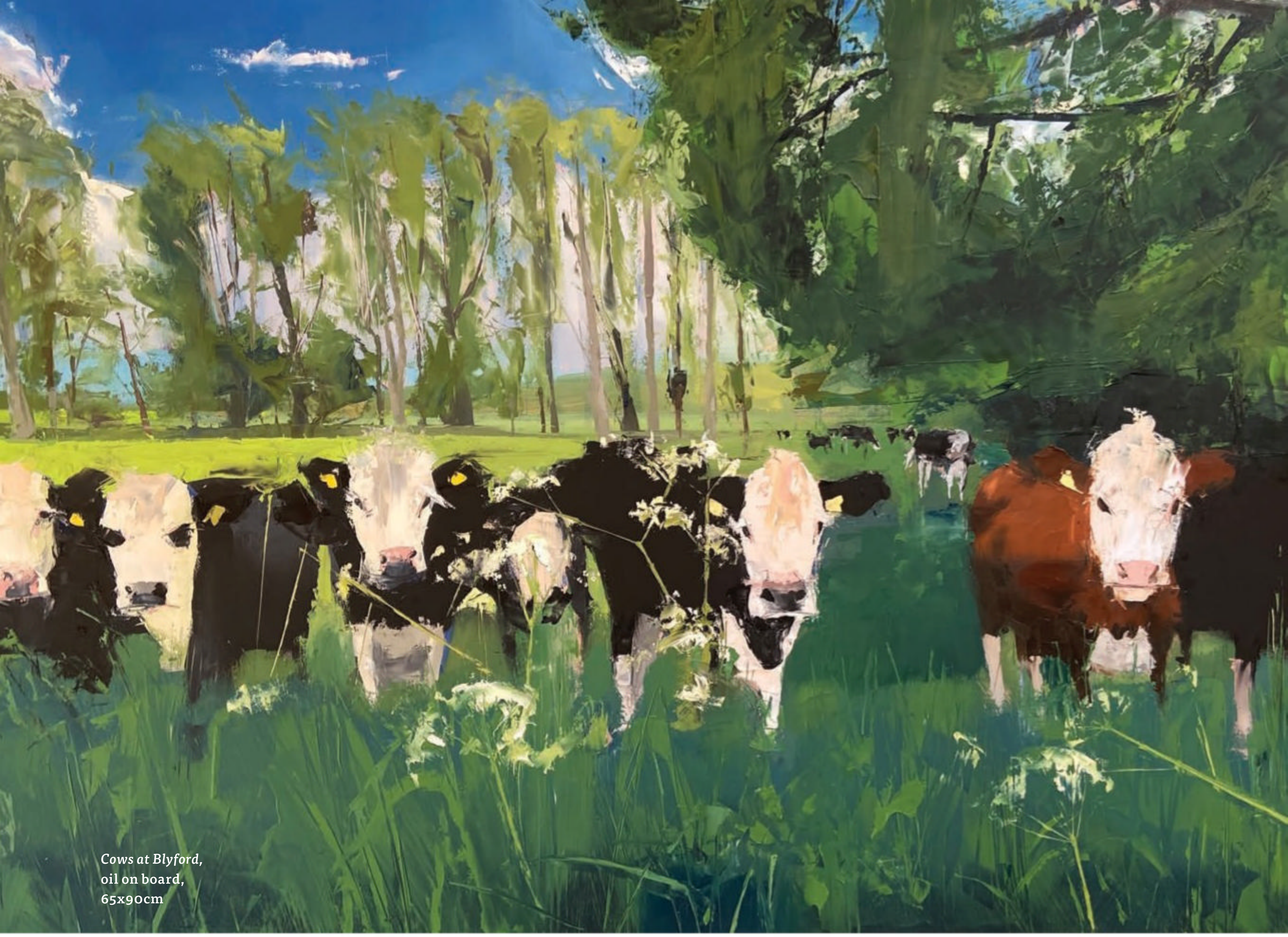
Field of Rye with Mallows, oil on board, 60x60cm



David Riches

This Suffolk-based artist paints landscapes rooted in childhood memories and keen observation, says *Ramsha Vistro* ▸



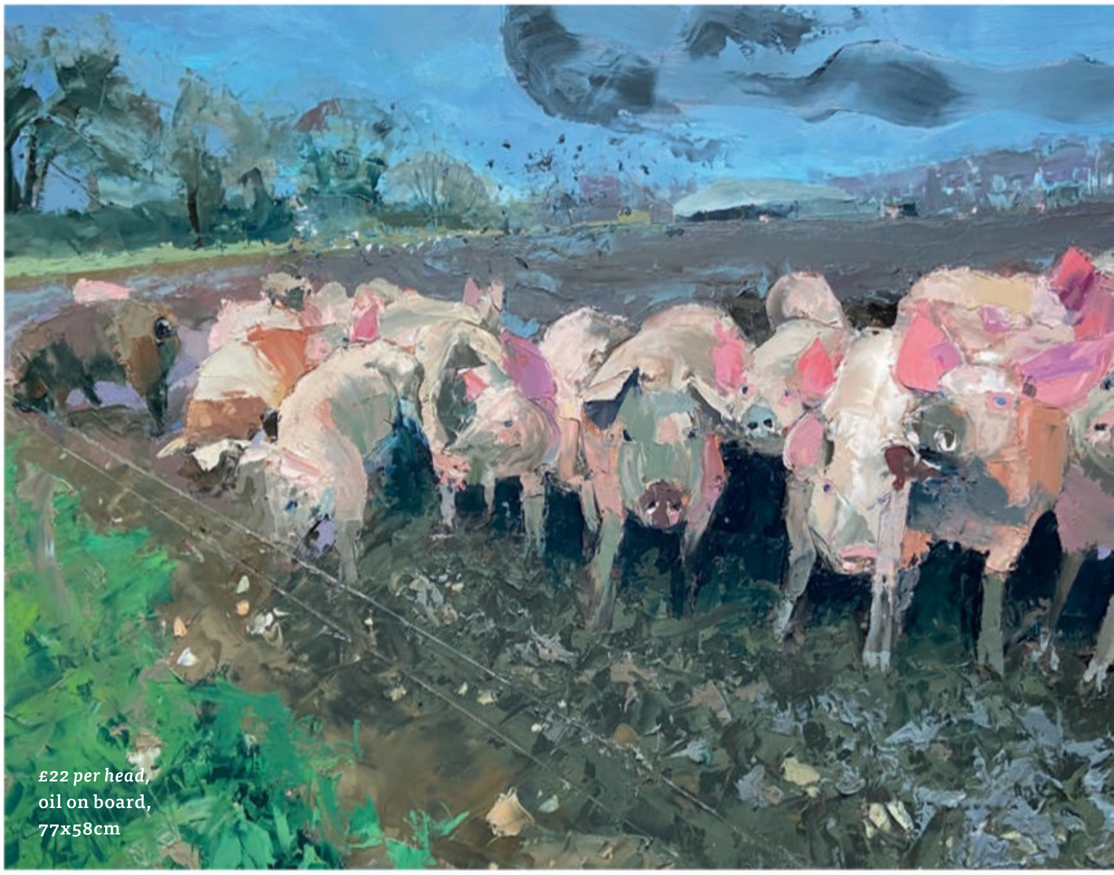


***Cows at Blyford*, oil on board, 65x90cm**

DECADES MAY HAVE PASSED, but Norfolk still has a claim on David Riches. Wooden sailing boats on the Broads, sunlight on the water, the quiet countryside – they still appear in his work. "If I see a traditional wooden sailing boat on the Norfolk Broads in a certain light, I can find myself welling up," he admits. These early memories inform how he approaches painting outdoors, shaping what he notices and how he captures it.

David's first real encounter with art came thanks to a teacher who spotted potential where others might have seen none. "A great art teacher at my school, David Cooper, got me my only A level, with which I managed to squeak into art college when all else failed," he recalls with a smile. That foundation was crucial, even if his formal training would take him in slightly different directions.

At Great Yarmouth College of Art, he learned to draw under Nick Ward. "This was huge for me as it gave me the means to communicate visually throughout my life," David says. Later, at Norwich School of Art, he studied graphic design, photography and



***£22 per head*, oil on board, 77x58cm**

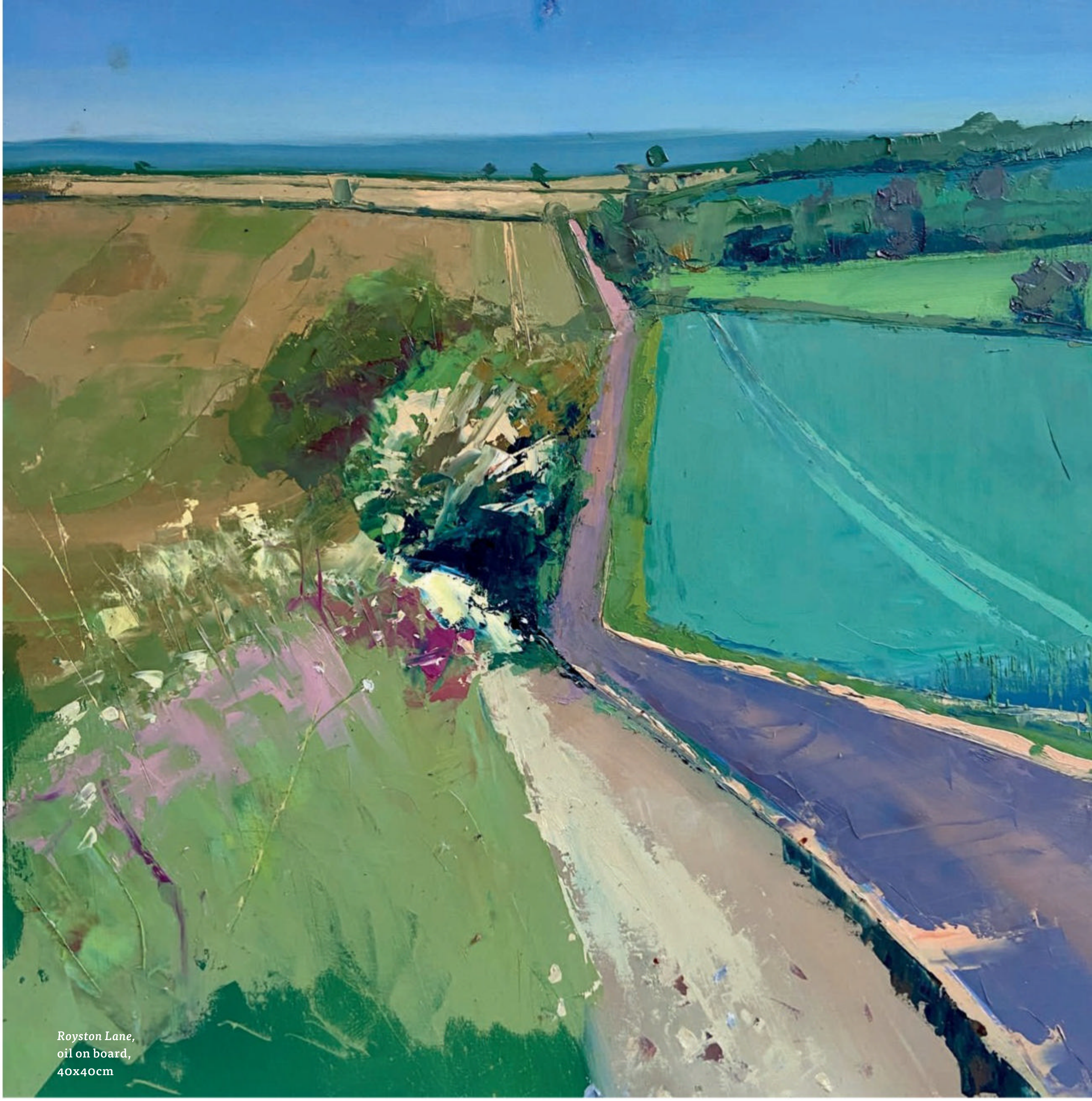

Royston Lane, oil on board, 40x40cm

illustration. "It was a great introduction into the creative industry. I was constantly learning about how images work and how to use them to tell a story." Despite these skills, painting itself was largely absent during his early career.

For 18 years, David ran a London design practice, Visible Edge, managing illustrators, photographers and designers. "One of the most valuable lessons you learn as a designer is not to be in any way precious with your work," he says. The experience honed his eye, taught him visual storytelling and gave him the confidence to make decisive choices, but the paintbrush remained largely untouched. Only after leaving the city did he commit to oil painting full-time.

For David, painting outdoors drives everything. His studio exists mainly for backup and preparation. "*En plein air* painting is more immediate and quicker; I simply don't have time for the hours spent labouring over a photograph." His art studio is functional rather than inspirational. Large, flexible and with strong north-facing light, it allows him to fine-tune landscapes captured outdoors or paint still lifes. "I use my studio for two things: still life paintings, particularly if the weather is rubbish, and final tweaks to landscapes from *en plein air* sessions," he explains. He tries to make sure everything is on wheels so the space can be rearranged quickly, and he can leave works mid-process without clearing up.

The studio's flexibility is central to his workflow. David can control light with blackout or semi-opaque blinds over the huge Velux windows and adjust the space for different projects. "I try not to do this, but sometimes with the sky changing and animals or people moving, you have to tweak something in the studio that you started ▶

outdoors," he says. The space functions both as a practical extension of his *en plein air* work and a place to experiment without worrying about making a mess. "It's warm, it's comfortable, and it can get covered in paint without it mattering," he smiles.

For David, the ability to leave a painting mid-flow and return later is crucial. "A painting in the evening, after a whole day's labour, can look very different first thing in the morning!" he notes, emphasising the value of stepping away and reassessing work. For younger artists, his advice is practical and blunt: the studio is a tool, not a source of inspiration. "You need the biggest studio space you can get, with good light and storage," he says.

His landscapes are notable for their impasto and strong graphic composition. He frames each painting with two simple L-shaped cards before he begins. "I can't start a painting without them; it's all about getting the right balance and tension," he says. Palette knife work allows colours to collide naturally. "Every time you correct a mark, you leave a bit of the original mistake behind. I think that's what creates the movement purely by accident."

He looks for vanishing points, tracks, paths or patches of water that draw the eye into the scene, with beaches and coastal landscapes particularly suited to this approach. While his paintings may appear abstract up close, they resolve into recognisable landscapes from a distance. "I can't seem to help it. When I'm at arm's length, they look very abstract to me, but as soon as you get further back, they become more figurative," he says. He insists that this balance between abstraction and realism isn't deliberate. "I wish I were much more abstract and consider my paintings far too figurative." The effect is a by-product of working quickly outdoors and responding to light and movement, rather than a conscious shift toward abstraction.

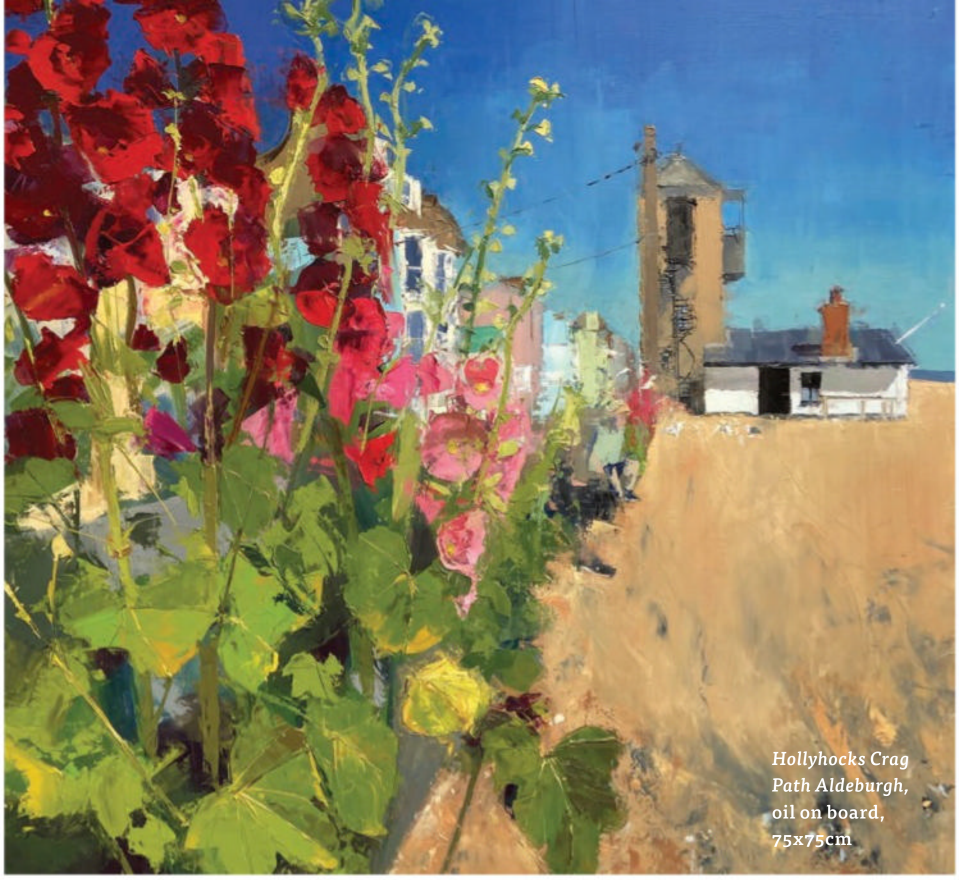
David's landscapes are chosen for visual tension and the way light interacts with the scene. "If it's a still life, I'll paint it in the studio," he says. "The rest of the time I'm simply responding to what I see out there and what time of the year it is." This continual observation informs not only what he paints, but how he paints it: the urgency of *en plein air* and the need to capture transient light and movement dictate his method.

Despite decades of experience, David approaches each painting with curiosity. "It's a huge subject and I still feel I'm at the beginning of it, scratching the surface. I've got so much to learn and explore, and I'm not getting any younger," he says. This sense of open-ended discovery drives him to spend hours on the road - walking, driving and riding - searching for new light, new compositions and those fleeting moments that make *en plein air* painting both challenging and exhilarating.

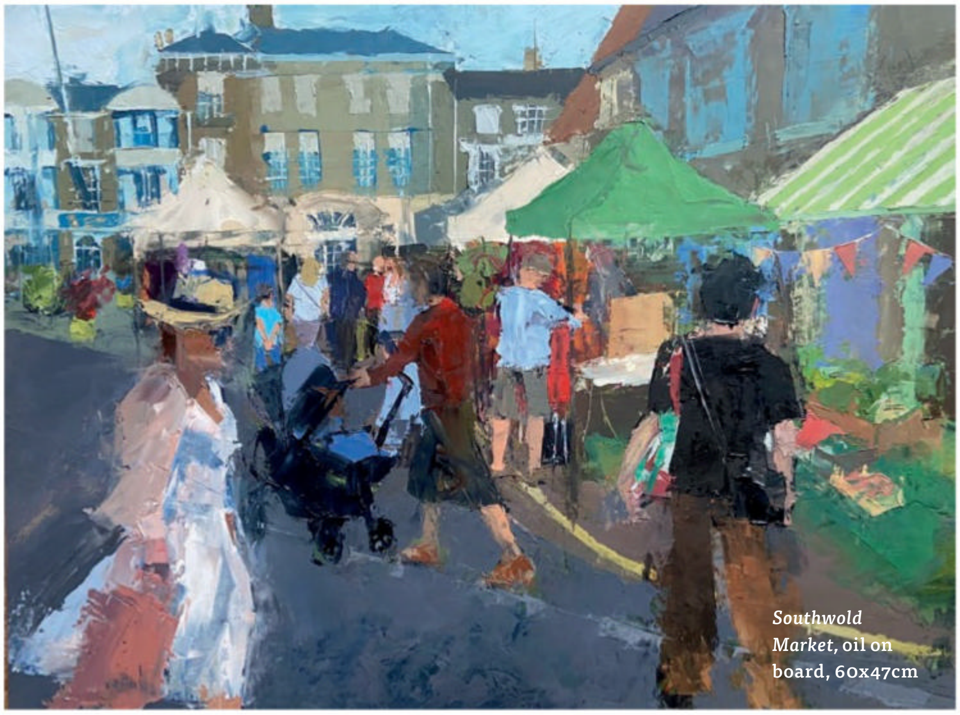
Looking back, David expresses neither regret nor nostalgia. "I think it probably was all necessary, but now I have a great sense of urgency," he admits. "I've got so much to learn and explore, I wish I'd started ten years before I did. I suspect, however, I'd say exactly the same if I'd been painting all my life."

David's practice – whether *en plein air*, studio preparation, framing or impasto – is guided by observation, attention and adaptability. He combines the precision of a designer with the responsiveness of a painter, negotiating control and accident, abstraction and figuration, always chasing light, colour and the fleeting moments that make his landscapes unmistakable.

davidrichespaintings.co.uk □

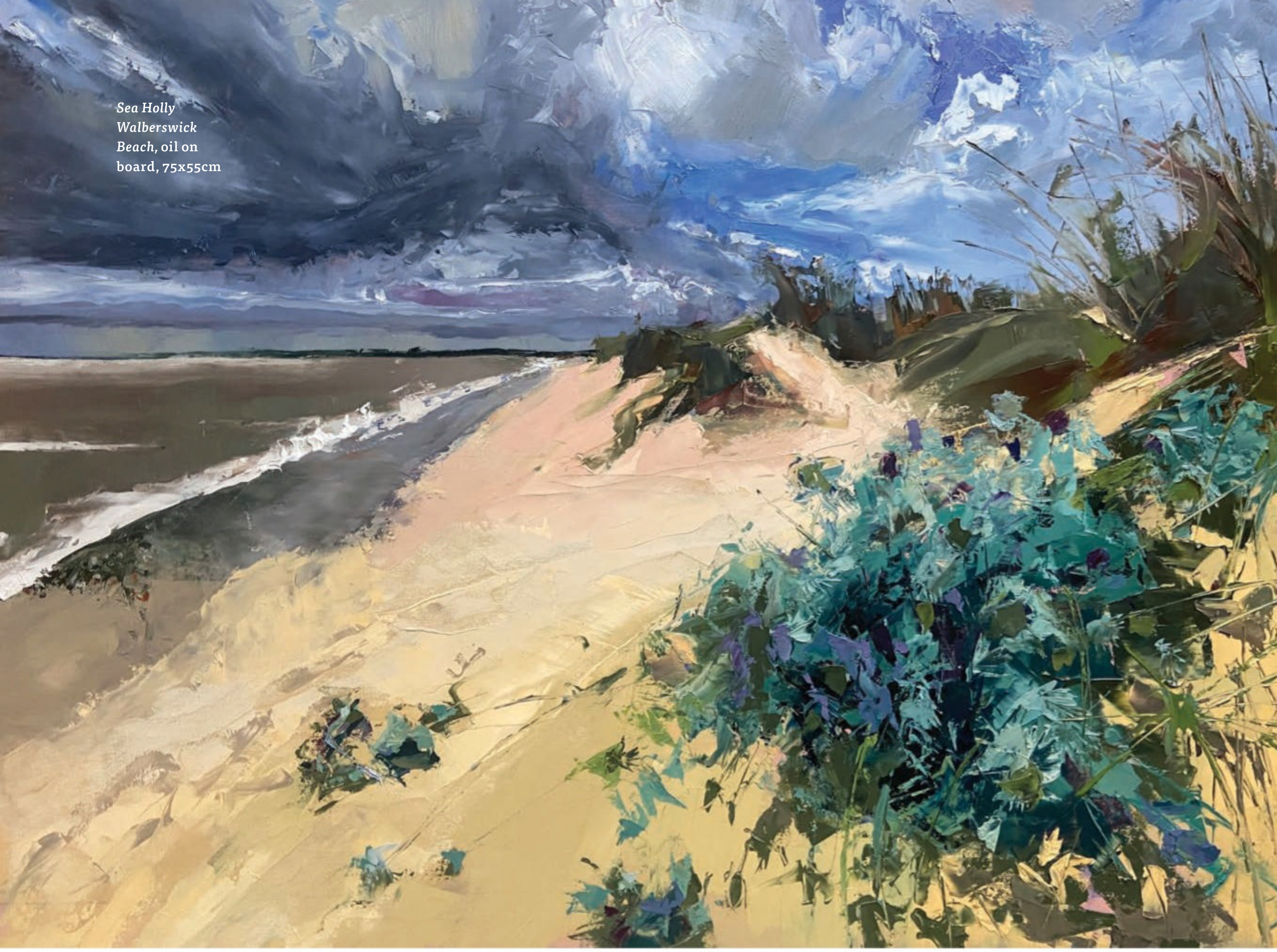


Hollyhocks Crag Path Aldeburgh, oil on board, 75x75cm

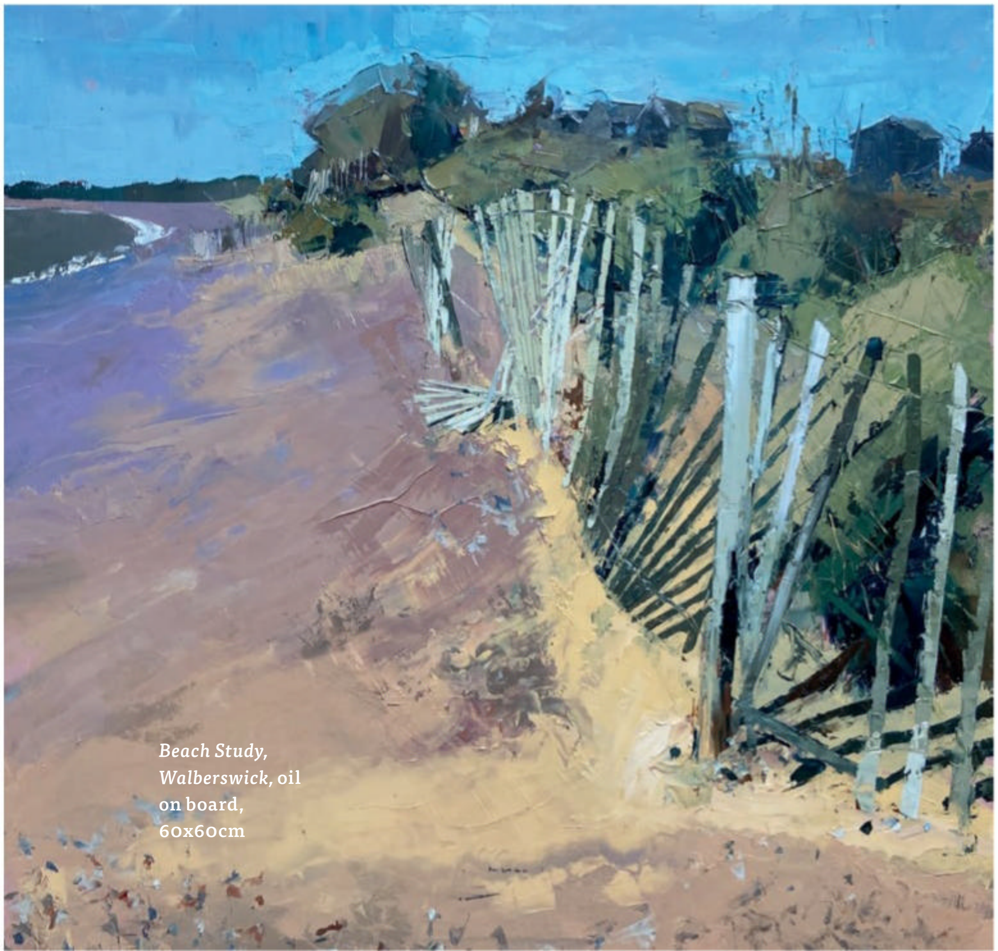


Southwold Market, oil on board, 60x47cm

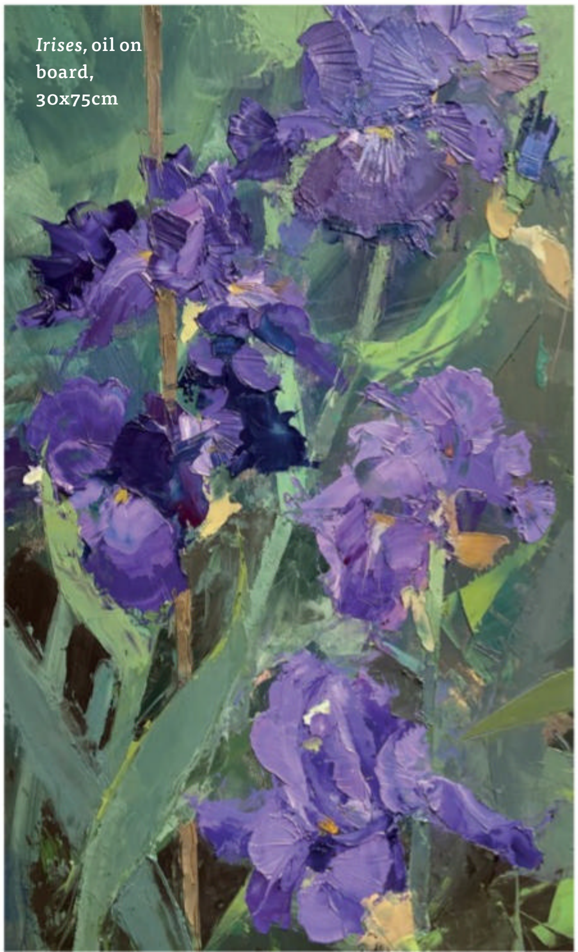
> **I was constantly learning how images work and how to use them to tell a story**



Sea Holly Walberswick Beach, oil on board, 75x55cm



Beach Study, Walberswick, oil on board, 60x60cm



Irises, oil on board, 30x75cm

HOW I MAKE IT WORK

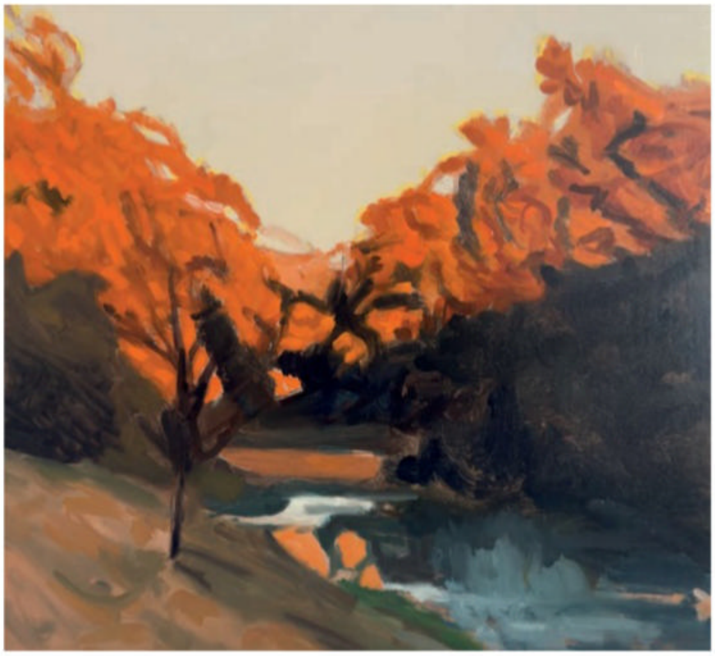
Luke Williams

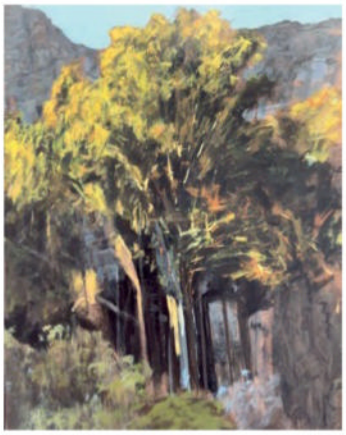
Former cheesemaker turned painter, this artist captures Cape Town's light and shadows

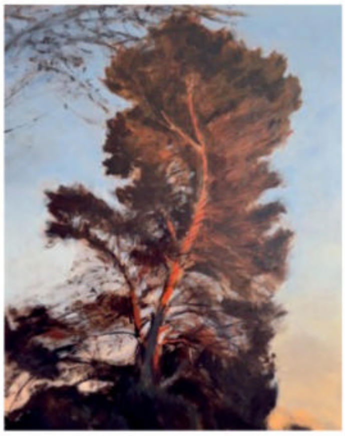
My life in the cheese world stemmed from a geeky fascination with microbial life and how those living microbes can change a food product. I started painting through a fascination with soil microbiology (my wife runs a regenerative food enterprise) and it was on the mountain, getting my hands in the soil, that I started to look around at the landscapes I now paint daily. Running a restaurant, cheese shop and wholesale business was pretty stressful and, no matter how successful or proud I was of that enterprise, I missed being a close father. Nothing is worth losing that connection.

Going to Chiswick Community School allowed me to walk through one of London's most beautiful parks on the way home from school on a daily basis. This immediate access was a much called for relief from London's heavy presence. My parents would take us on walking trips to the - often soggy - Yorkshire countryside or the Welsh mountains and it was there that my deep appreciation of the outdoors began.

Just prior to the lockdown (which was pretty intense here in Cape Town) I had purchased an iPad which had Procreate on it. Due to having three young children stuck in a house for weeks on end, the house was pretty messy. COVID got me drawing on the iPad. I had no paints, so I started sketching and posting on Instagram, not expecting anything to be gained from it. Almost immediately, I had people asking how much prints of my work would cost and it went from there.





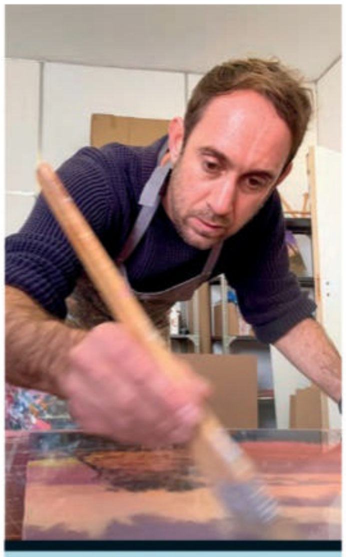


TOP *Mist On The River After It Rained A Lot The Night Before*, oil, 50x50cm
ABOVE LEFT *Yellow Tree Under Table Mountain*, acrylic, 42x59cm
ABOVE RIGHT *Sun Salutations*, acrylic, 54x40cm

Transitioning to oils from digital wasn't as hard as it sounds, as my grandfather, Harold, was an oil painter and when I was a child he taught me how to paint with the medium. In fact, oils were easier than acrylics for me as I could make a mistake, wipe it off and start again.

Digital art wasn't where I wanted to be. Staring at a screen is fine for some but I quickly yearned for real paint: the smells and mistakes. I have absolutely zero regrets. I'm not sure I would have had the deep connection with nature at 20 as I did at 40, when I eventually started painting. My wife may not have been so interested in me as an artist, were I not a cheesemaker who could recite the Latin names of all bacteria in cheese.

lukewilliamsart.com □



LUKE'S TIPS FOR BECOMING A FULL-TIME ARTIST

1

Find something that truly fascinates you
Something that makes your heart skip, and go with it.

2

Pursue that fascination and get geeky
Collect any image that inspires; you never know what that will become or where it could take you.

3

Don't stare at social media unless it is related to this fascination
In which case, you are allowed to go down that rabbit hole and immerse yourself. Once you emerge, go and create.

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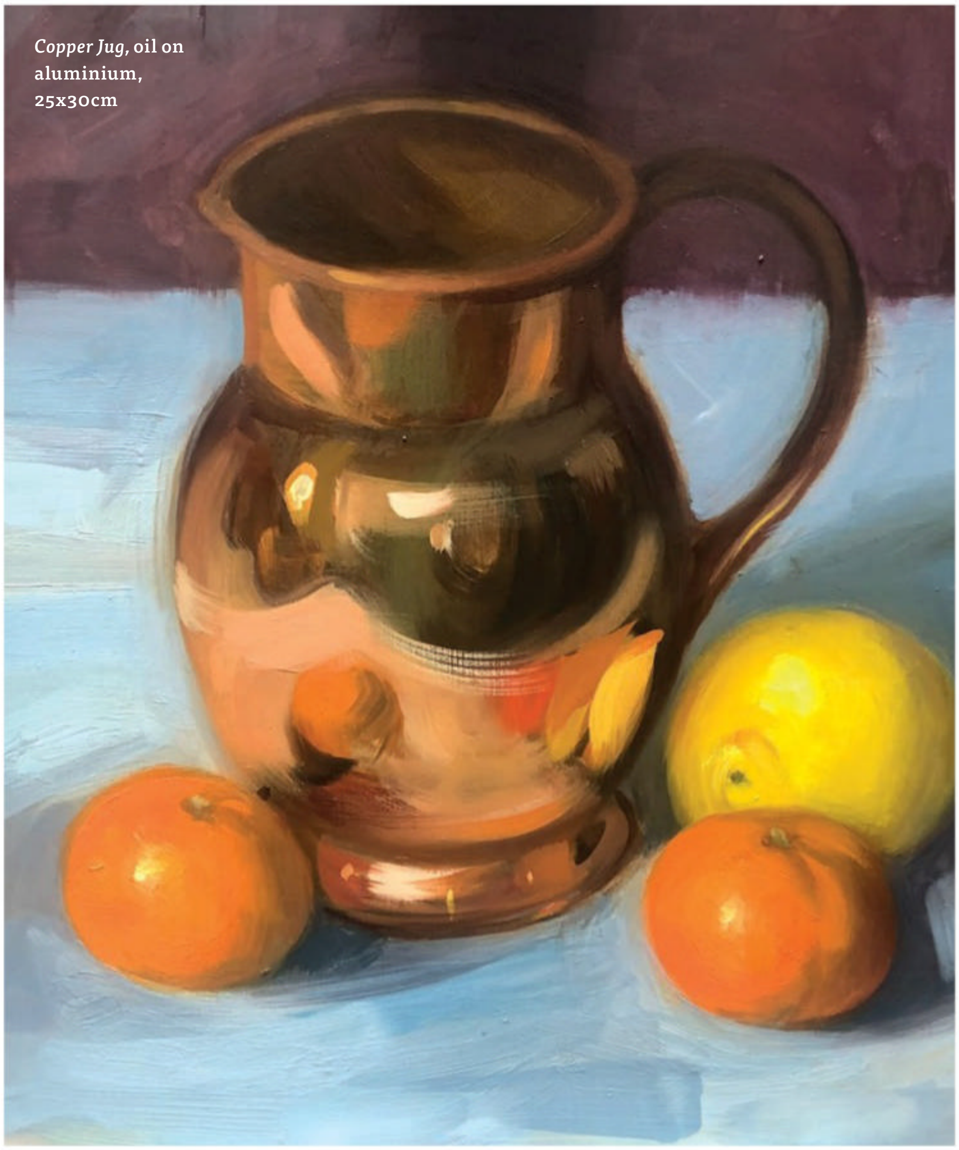
Kathy Barker

Portrait artist, **KATHY BARKER**, tells *Sarah Edghill* how she captures the essence of her subjects



Copper Jug, oil on aluminium, 25x30cm

THIS ARTIST IS A PROFESSIONAL working from her London studio in a mix of oils, charcoals and pastels. In addition to portrait painting, she teaches privately and holds weekly classes, while she has exhibited her work with the esteemed Royal Society of Portrait Painters and the Society of Women Artists. ***kathybarker.co.uk***

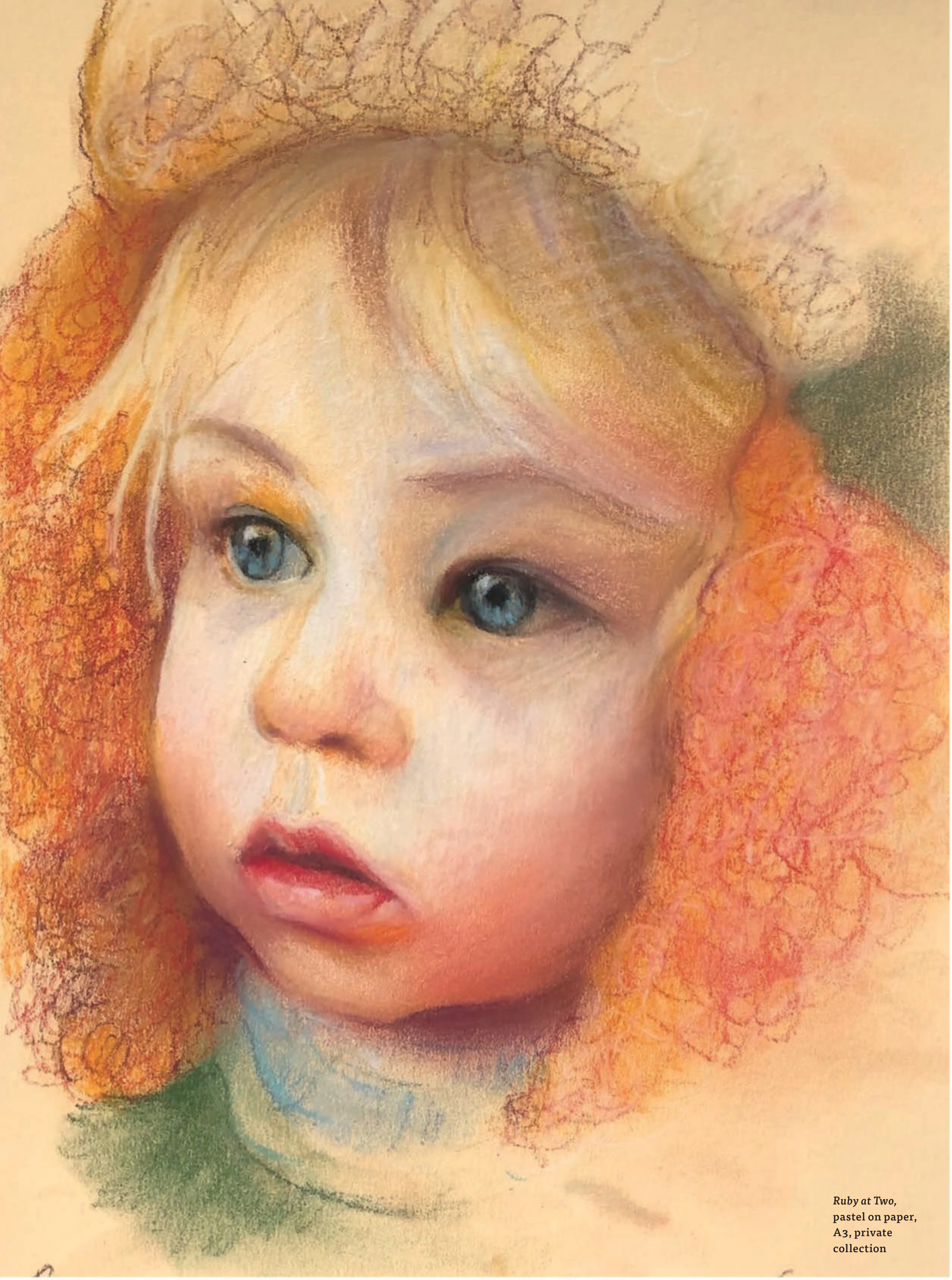
Portraiture was my first love.
If I was only allowed to do one thing for the rest of my career, it would be portraiture. I love the challenge of capturing a face and how it develops with each sitting. Portraits are special: they show a moment in time in greater depth than any photograph and will almost certainly outlive us and be seen by generations to come.

I have always been drawn to paper, excuse the pun.
As a child, I made my homework look pretty and illustrated it, rather than learning the actual content. From my teens onwards I especially liked doing portraits. I started a Spanish degree, but throughout the first year I sketched several portraits of my fellow students and, feeling unfulfilled, ended up leaving and doing an evening art course in London. It was to be the beginning of seven years of training: I did a foundation course, followed by a BA in Fine Art Painting, followed by an MA in Printmaking, all at Wimbledon School of Art. Then I did a year's training in classical portraiture in Florence, at the Charles Cecil Studios.

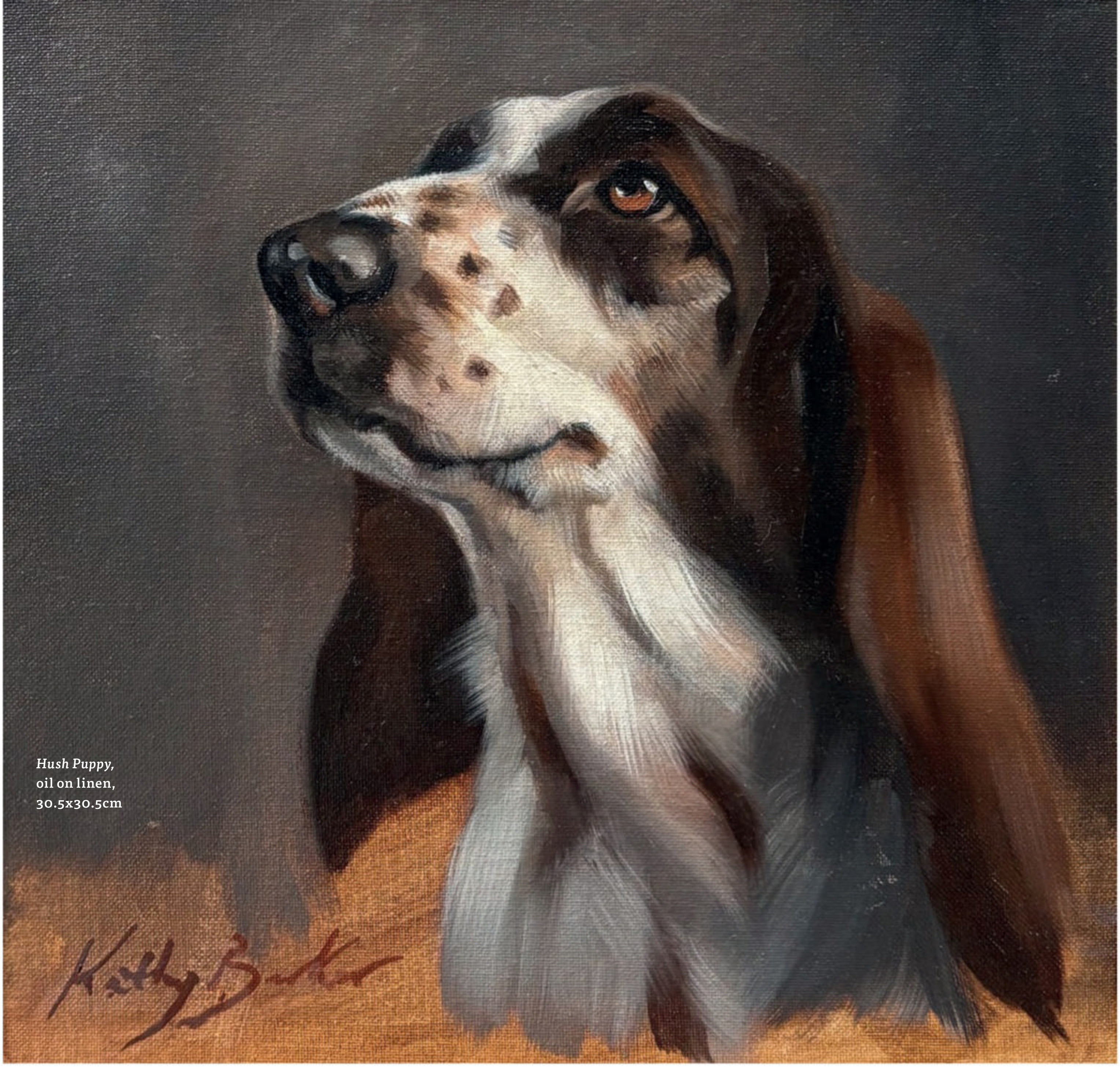
I love the challenges offered by painting a portrait.
When working from life, you get to know your sitter and first impressions make a mark on your mind. Likeness is important, but what matters most is capturing the essence of a person: a slight expression or the tilt of a head can portray a characteristic nuance.

I do portraits in charcoal but mostly work in oil for faces.
It's so flexible on the canvas and allows you time to move the paint around. I like a three-month time frame for each portrait, because I prefer to work in layers, and I need the layer underneath to be dry when I do the next. I also like to take a rest from what I'm seeing so, when resuming, I can more easily see what needs changing or what I need to do next. ▸

www.xsava.xyz



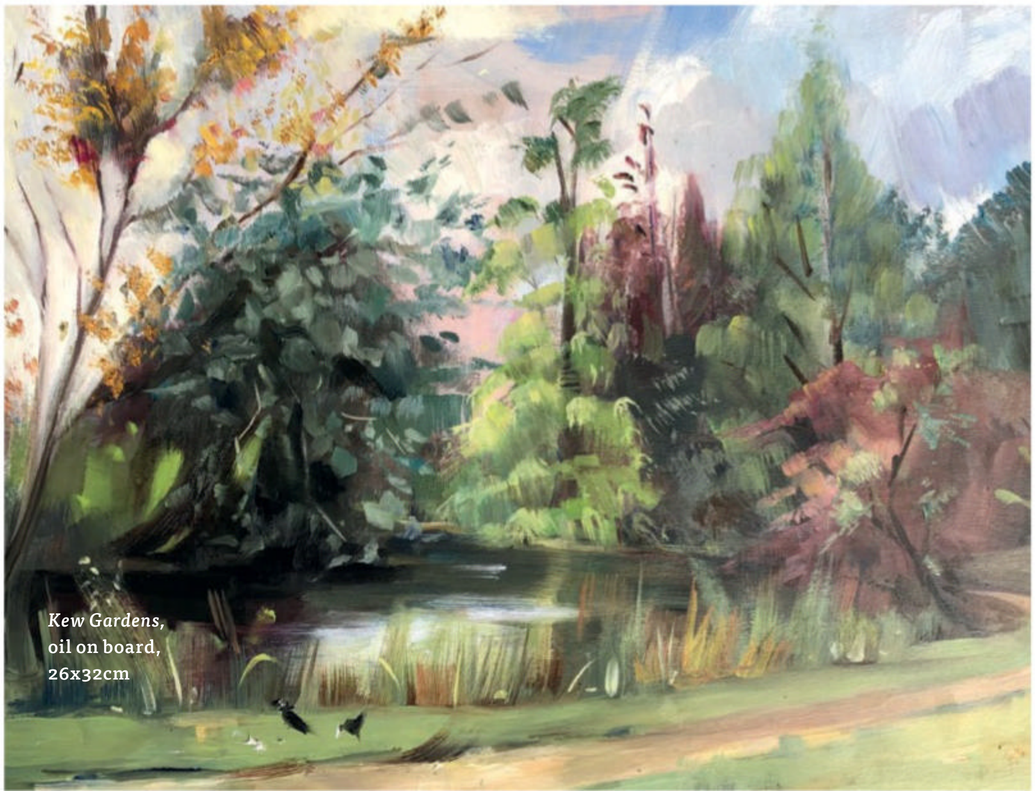
***Ruby at Two*, pastel on paper, A3, private collection**



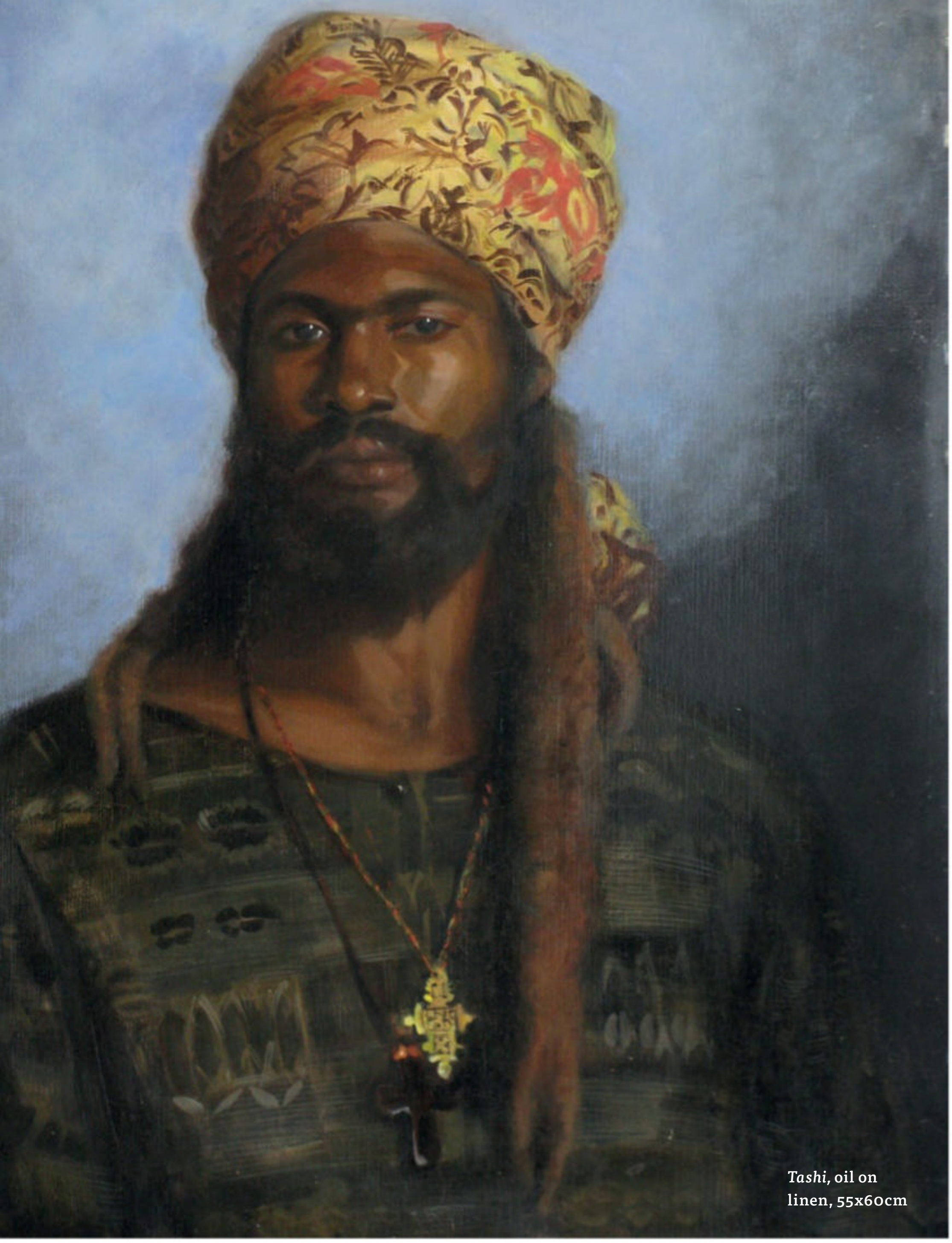
Hush Puppy, oil on linen, 30.5x30.5cm

I'm a messy artist with too much clutter.
However, my studio is a movable feast which adapts to a sitting, followed by a tutorial or a change of set up. Despite the paraphernalia I know where everything is - unless I do a grand tidy up.

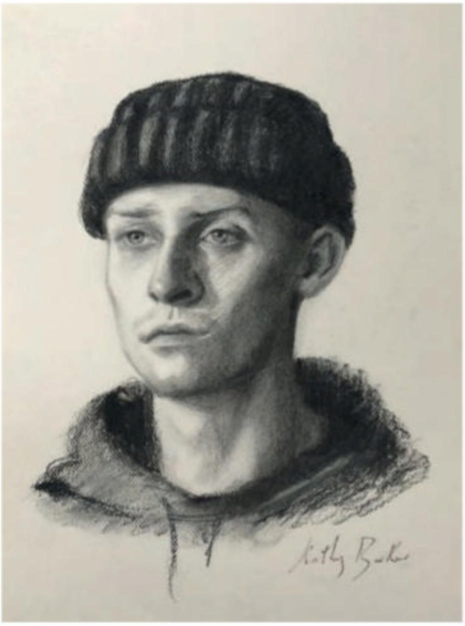
Being in my studio puts sitters at ease.
It is genuinely an artist's space and not pristine and tidy. But something about it instantly relaxes people as they gaze around: there is so much work hanging on the walls to look at. Sittings last up to three hours, but no one is expected to sit for the whole time. I always explain what is going to happen and then take photographs of my sitter from different angles. We look at these together on my laptop which helps because they get to see what I'm looking at.



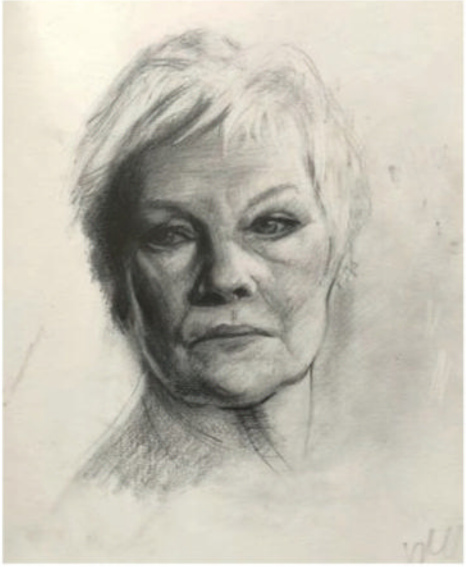
Kew Gardens, oil on board, 26x32cm



Tashi, oil on linen, 55x60cm



Skateboarder, charcoal on paper, 30x42cm



Dame Judi Dench, graphite on paper, 22x30cm

The first 40 minutes are the best. That's when you establish some anchoring positions of the head and, as the sitter is fresh, there's less restlessness and energy in the face. In those first crucial 40 minutes, where I'm measuring, I require stillness and some clients will opt to listen to the radio, which helps keep their face more alive because they're interested in what they are listening to. Others prefer to enjoy the time to be still in their otherwise busy lives.

After that first stage, we have mini breaks for a coffee. It's an interesting experience for the client to see the portrait developing when they have breaks and it also becomes a work made by the both of us. As the session progresses, I will often ask questions as I like getting to know the person sitting there. Conversation can also help put back energy and pleasant expressions in their faces. But when I need to concentrate, I have to stop myself chatting, otherwise it's like trying to write a letter and have a conversation about unrelated topics at the same time.

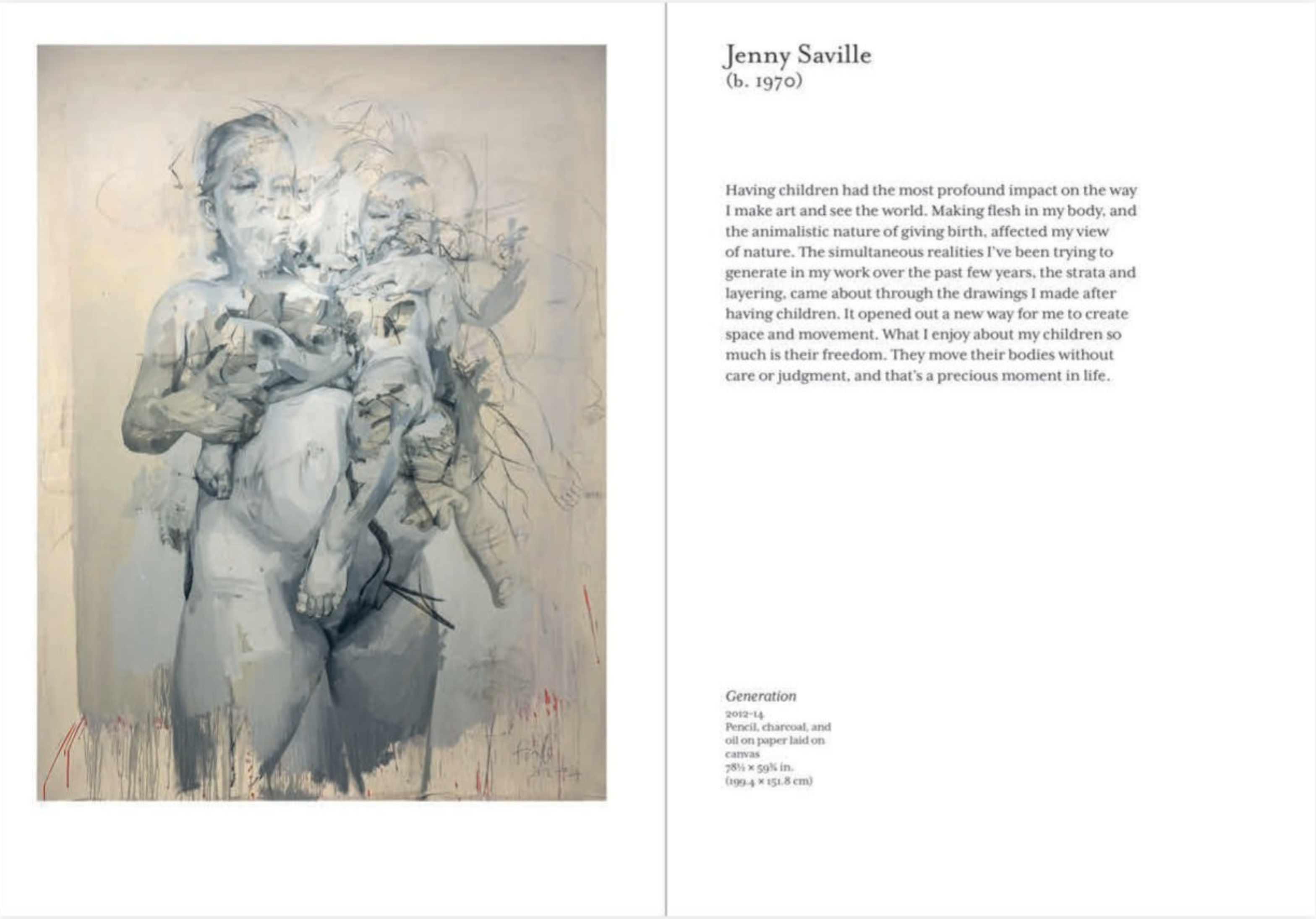
The hardest part to paint is always the mouth. It's tricky because it's such a movable part of the face. I tell my students to never do pencil lipstick lines! The upper lip is usually tonally darker and the bottom lip is described by the shadow underneath the lip, so the only undulating line you see is the place where top and bottom lip meet.

I naturally want the painting to be the best it can be. I always photograph my work in stages and at times I can become obsessive, which can be detrimental if you end up overworking a painting, because when you see the photographs, you wish you'd stopped two sessions ago. I have to give myself a little pep talk to say I can get back whatever it was I lost by painting over something, it just might take longer. Sometimes, with personal work, I have wiped it all out and started again, which is actually very therapeutic and can save a lot of time. Occasionally, I have got tired of a painting, lost interest and cast it aside, maybe to pick it up again much later down the line. However, I have never not finished a client's portrait and I'll work on that until I'm satisfied.

My favourite portrait is of Tashi (above). He was a mango seller I painted in Antigua. He came to sit for us at my friend's art studio and he wore a turban; my immediate impression was that he had such a princely aura and that was the essence I wanted to capture. □

Women artists in their own words

This exclusive book extract features rich and inspiring quotes – each accompanied by a superb artwork – from leading female artists of the last 150 years, each revealing the very essence of what it is to create. Here are our top picks



Jenny Saville
(b. 1970)

Having children had the most profound impact on the way I make art and see the world. Making flesh in my body, and the animalistic nature of giving birth, affected my view of nature. The simultaneous realities I've been trying to generate in my work over the past few years, the strata and layering, came about through the drawings I made after having children. It opened out a new way for me to create space and movement. What I enjoy about my children so much is their freedom. They move their bodies without care or judgment, and that's a precious moment in life.

Generation
2012–14
Pencil, charcoal, and oil on paper laid on canvas
78½ × 59¾ in.
(199.4 × 151.8 cm)

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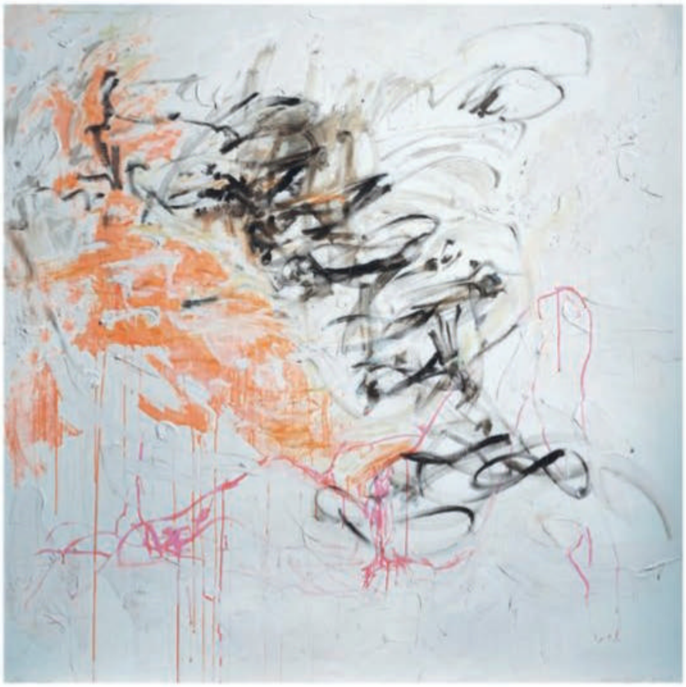
Dame Tracey Emin
(b. 1963)

Most people would have a nervous breakdown if they didn't have their phone for a day; I would have a total breakdown if there was no culture, no art. I couldn't live without art, it would be impossible. People don't even realise the value of art, they take it for granted.

True art is very powerful; the greatest paintings have souls. They breathe and stare at us; we are looking through the artist's eyes.

I am the custodian, the curator of the images that live in my mind. Every image has first entered my mind, travelled through my heart, my blood—arriving at the end of my hand. Everything has come through me.

Hurricane
2007
Oil on canvas
72 × 72 in.
(182.9 × 182.9 cm)



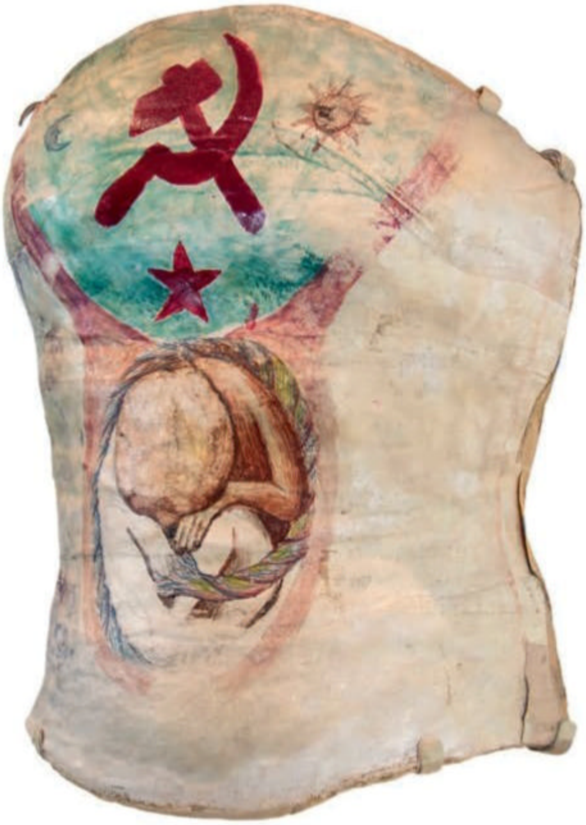
Frida Kahlo
(1907–1954)

I want to turn [my work] into something useful; until now I have managed simply an honest expression of my own self, but one which is unfortunately a long way from serving the [Communist] Party. I must struggle with all my strength to ensure that the little positive that my health allows me to do also benefits the Revolution, the only real reason to live.

I adore surprise and the unexpected. I like to go beyond realism ... Surrealism is the magical surprise of finding a lion in a wardrobe, when you were "sure" of finding shirts ... I use surrealism as a means of poking fun at others without their realizing it and of making friends with those who do realize it ... I paint my own reality. The only thing I know is that I paint because I need to, and I paint always whatever passes through my head, without any other consideration.

There have been two great accidents in my life. One was the trolley [bus] and the other was Diego [Rivera]. Diego was by far the worst.

Hammer and Sickle (and unborn baby)
c. 1950
Dry plaster and mixed media
16¼ × 13 × 6 in.
(41.3 × 33 × 15.2 cm)



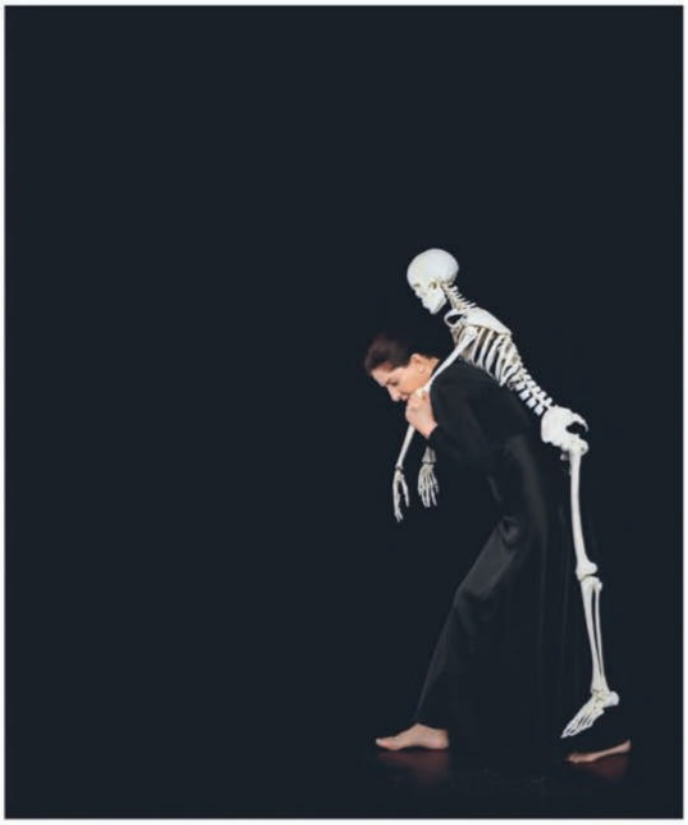
Marina Abramović
(b. 1946)

I made this work in 2008 during a very difficult and emotional moment in my life. I felt lonely and had an intense awareness of my own mortality. I found a skeleton that was my size and decided to carry it into the black void.

Art must have many layers. Art is not just about another beautiful painting that matches your dining room floor. Art has to be disturbing, art has to ask a question, art has to predict the future. It has to do all these kinds of things. An art concept has to have so many layers so that every part of society can take what it needs.

My whole purpose in life is to communicate what I'm doing. I see myself as a modern nomad and a soldier at the same time. Being mainstream won't change me because once I have something to perform, a task, then I'm a soldier. And I've always been a soldier.

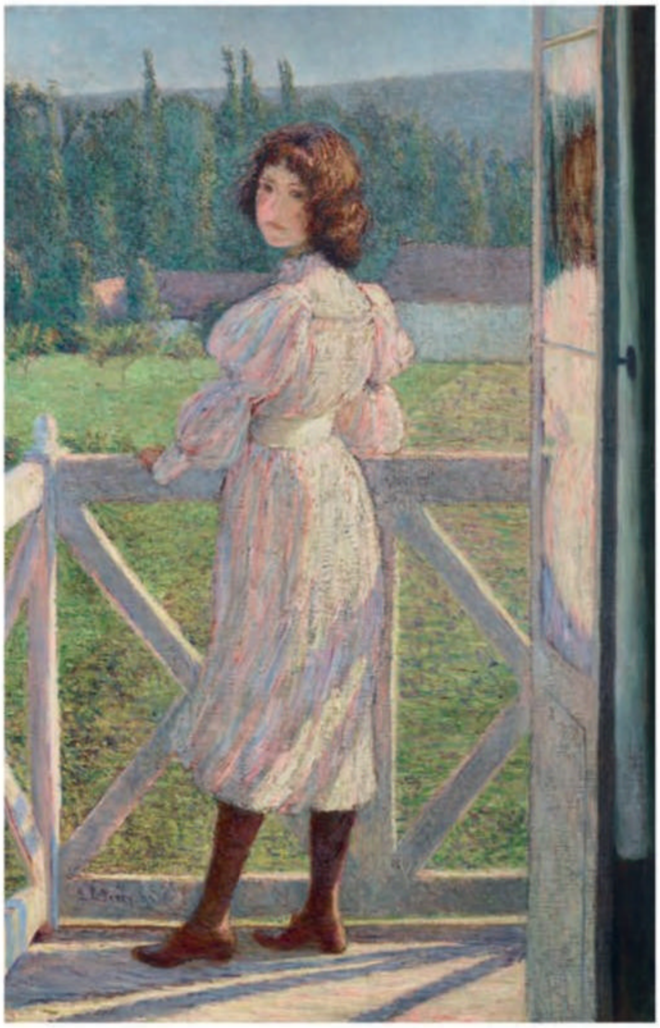
Carrying the Skeleton
2008
Color chromogenic print
80 × 71 in.
(203.2 × 180.3 cm)
No. 5 from an edition of
9 plus 2 artist's proofs

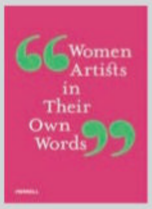


Lilla Cabot Perry
(1848–1933)

If you are to be a true painter, you must approach nature in a mood of humility and love. Nothing else will do. The painter must first choose something that he finds interesting or beautiful and then try to paint it exactly as it appears to him. He must not think about how anyone else painted other subjects or might paint this one; his task is to be utterly true to his own vision. And above all he must not paint to make an impression or an easy sale. If he will go with humility and love, and be true, he will give that rendering of nature which Octave Feuillet or some other French writer called "Nature seen through a temperament."

Girl on a Balcony
1894
Oil on canvas
32 × 20¾ in.
(81.3 × 52.7 cm)

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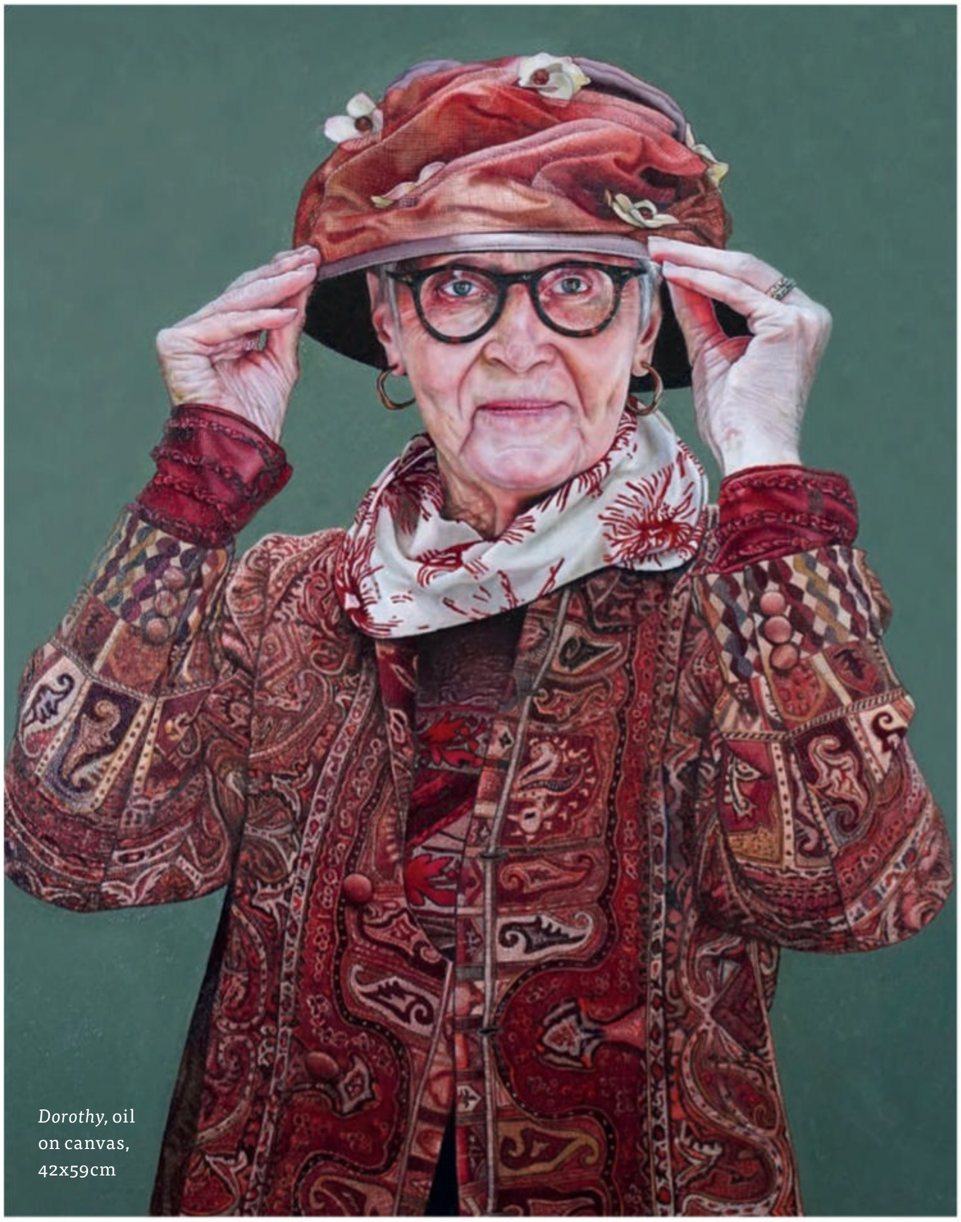
THE BIG INTERVIEW

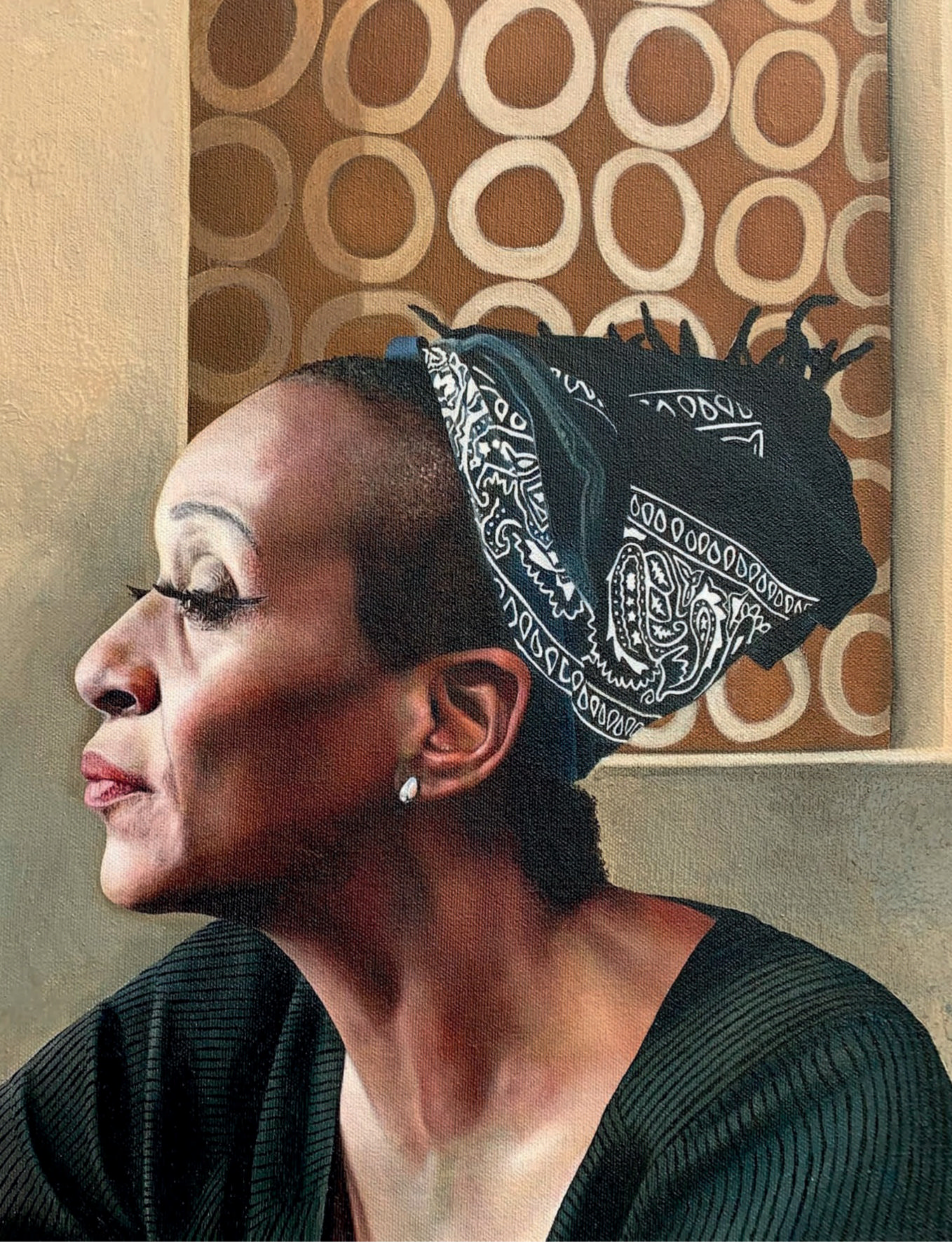
Caroline Pool

An artist who champions the elderly, **CAROLINE POOL** tell *Niki Browes* how she got to celebrate their wealth of life experience through paint ▶



Dorothy, oil on canvas, 42x59cm

Songbird, oil on canvas, 40x40cm

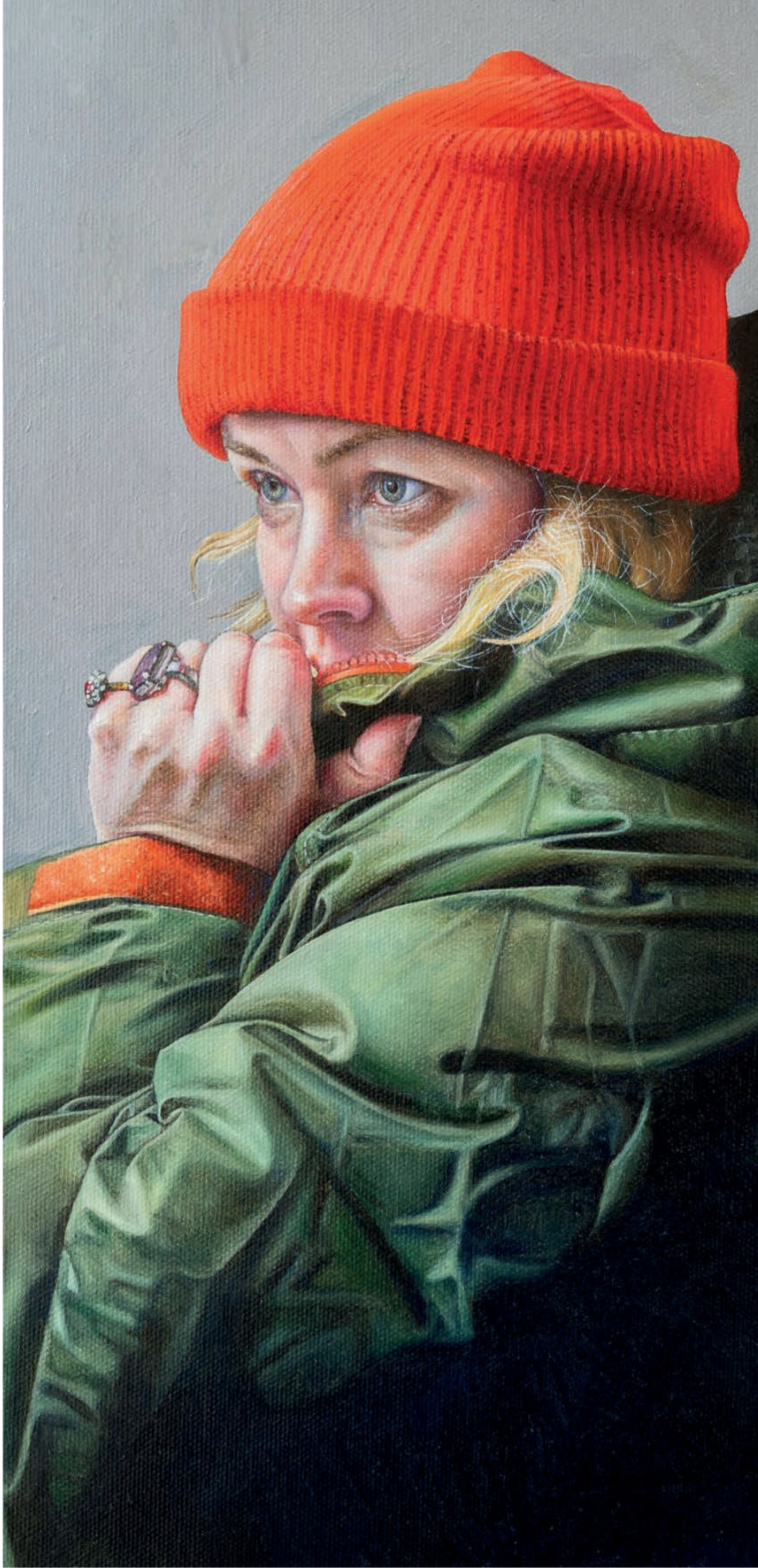


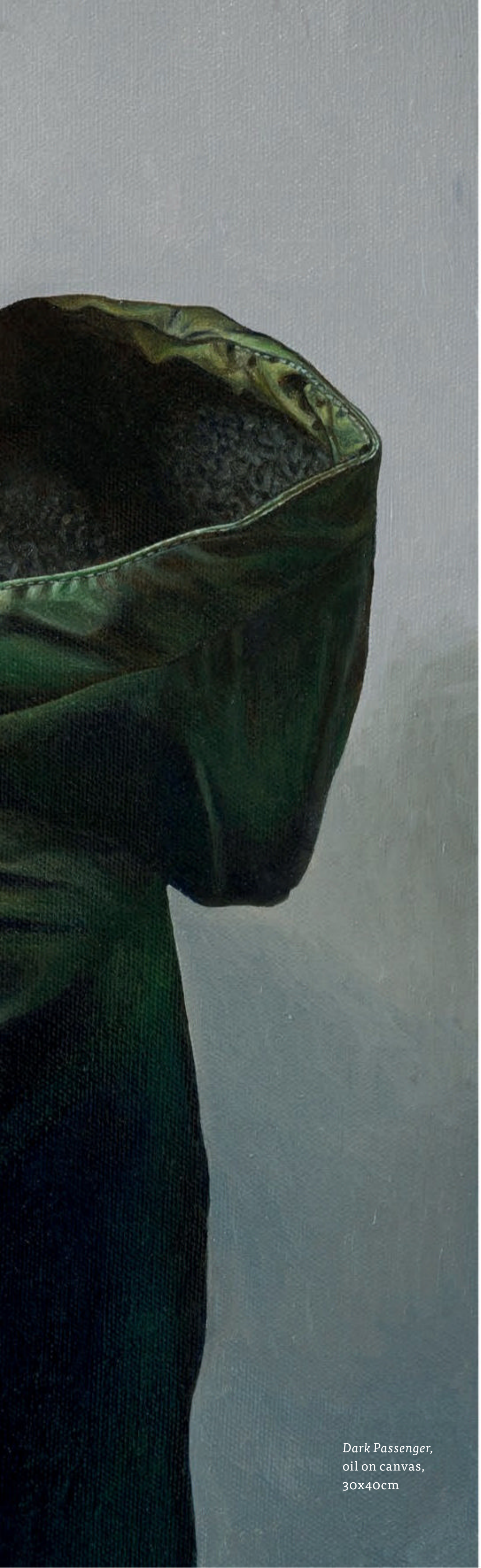
After school, Caroline Pool could have easily applied to her local college to further her art education. Yet, being the last of four children who were all supremely academic, negotiating with her father the idea that she wanted to study art was, as she says, comical. "What kind of stability is that as a job?" he asked, before adding, "If you want to pursue this, you need to go to the best art school there is."

What followed was a successful "X Factor style interview process" for the foundation course at the prestigious school of St. Martins. Specialising in illustration, Caroline now realises that she wasn't on the right course. Today, she would have told her 18-year-old self to skip art school altogether. She would have advised that young woman to: "Take your money and rent a studio space with other artists in London and spend that time developing your practice." Instead, she segwayed into film set design, which informed the importance of composition and light. Several years later, she pivoted back to painting and now loves to majestically portray those in their golden years. ***carolinepool.com***

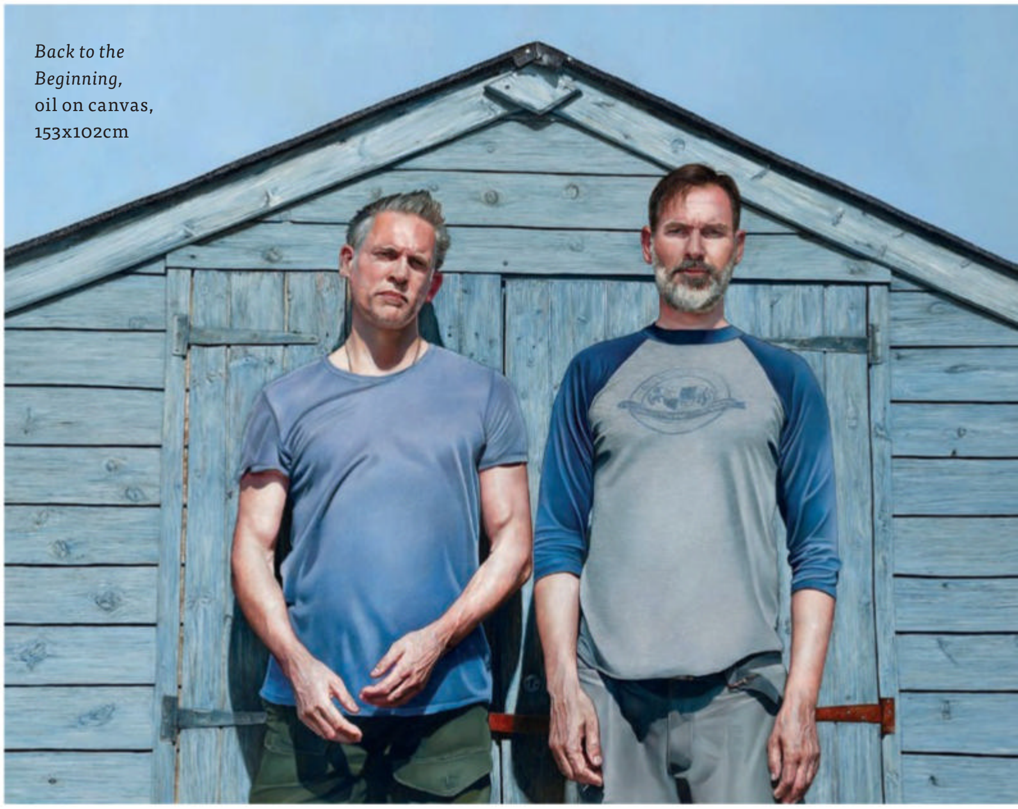
I could talk for days about portraying the elderly.
I have always loved engaging with older people. I've thought about this a lot over the years, and I really believe it stems from not having grandparents growing up. They died before I was born or when I was very young: I have very little memory of them. I missed that connection. As I've got older, and I've made more and more connections with these generations, I just can't understand how as a society we so easily marginalise this demographic. You're no longer considered a productive member of the pack, so you're discarded. It's absurd. There is so much to learn from older people: not just personal stories but a wealth of knowledge about history, places and how people lived through events. All of these stories that would otherwise die with them if not documented. I love the idea of kicking to the curb this ridiculous notion that ageing has this negative connotation, and giving people a platform through paint to tell their stories that would otherwise be forgotten.

A certain pose or hint of expression leads you to wonder who this person is.
What's their story? They might remind you of someone you know or once knew, and you start to project your own life experiences onto this perfect stranger. A portrait is ▶

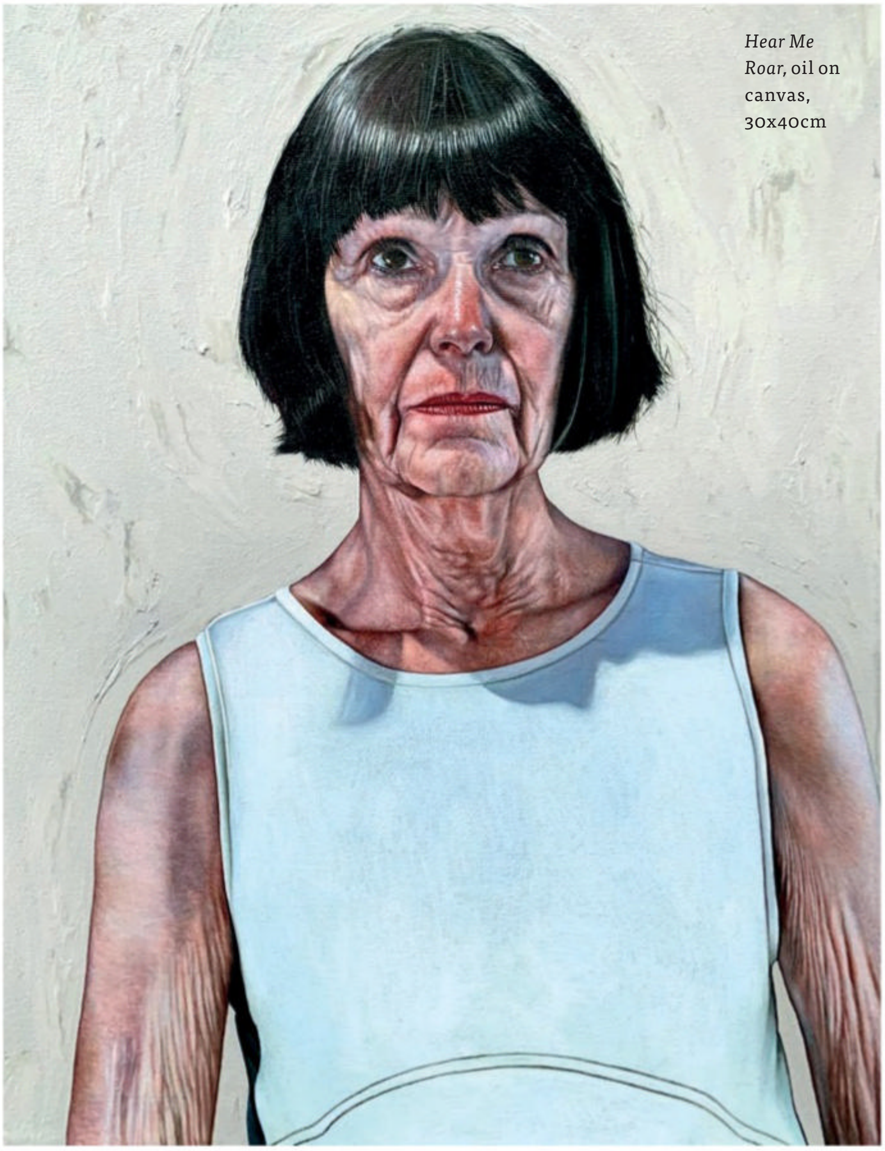




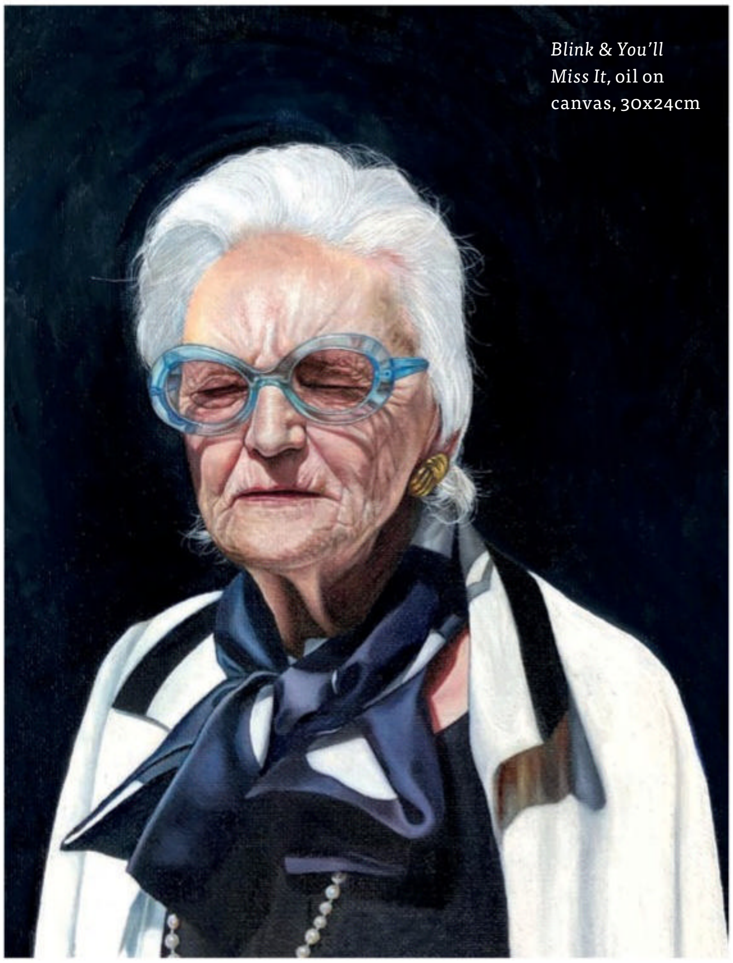
Dark Passenger, oil on canvas, 30x40cm



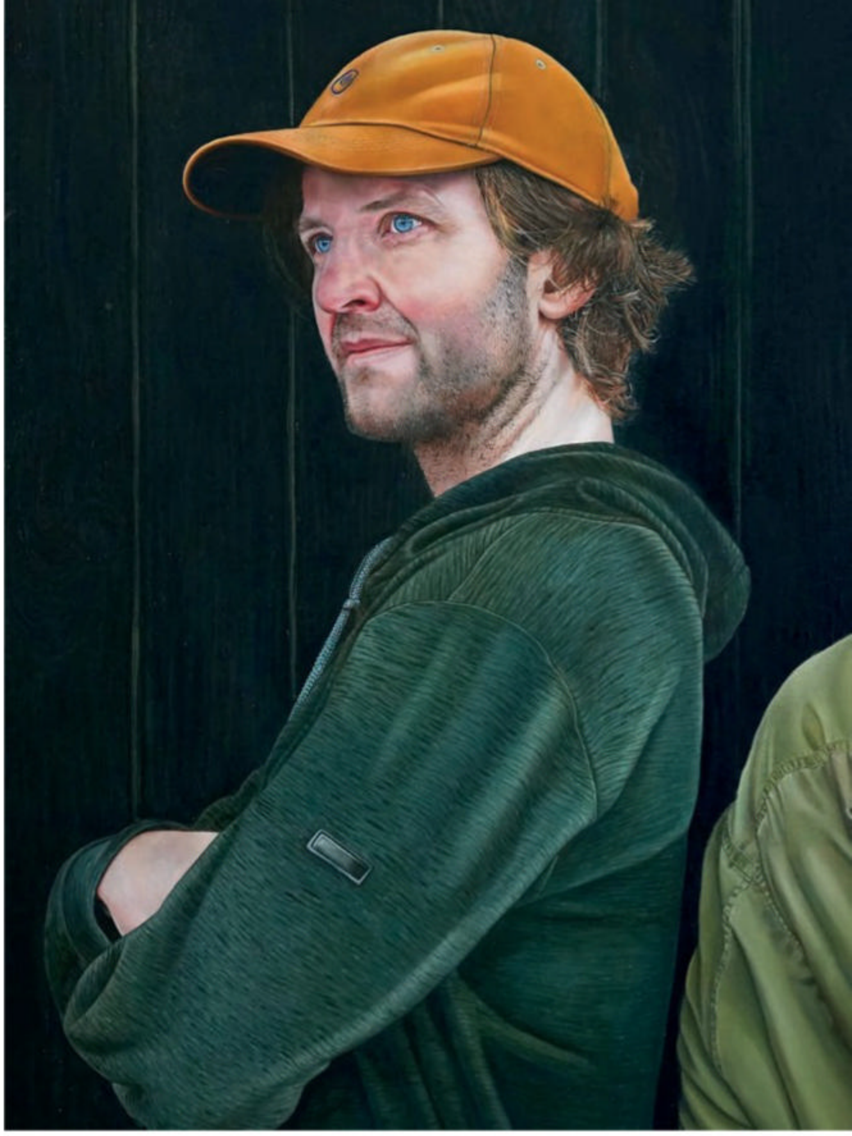
Back to the Beginning, oil on canvas, 153x102cm

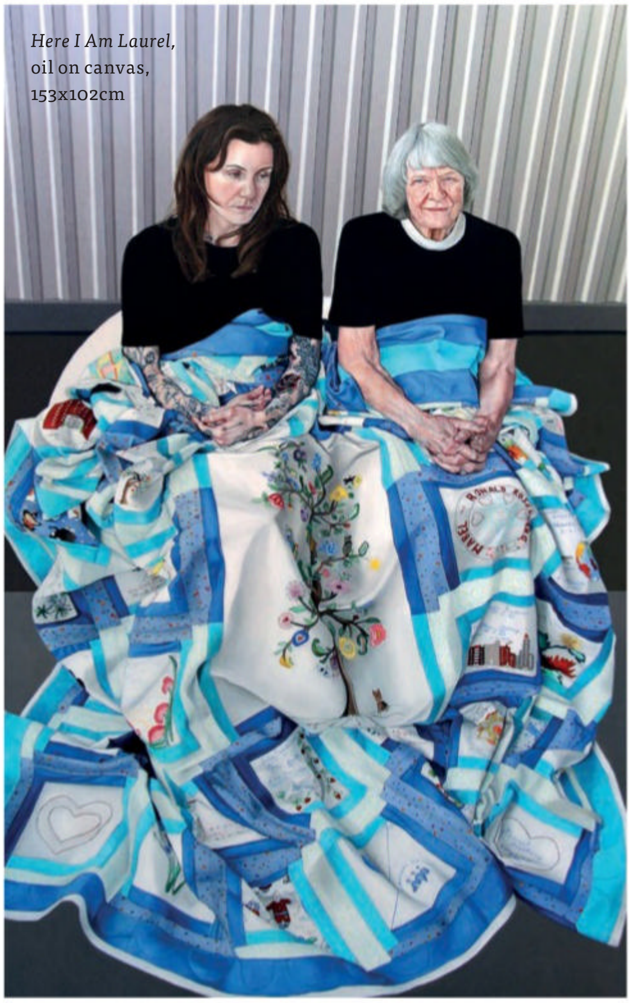


Hear Me Roar, oil on canvas, 30x40cm

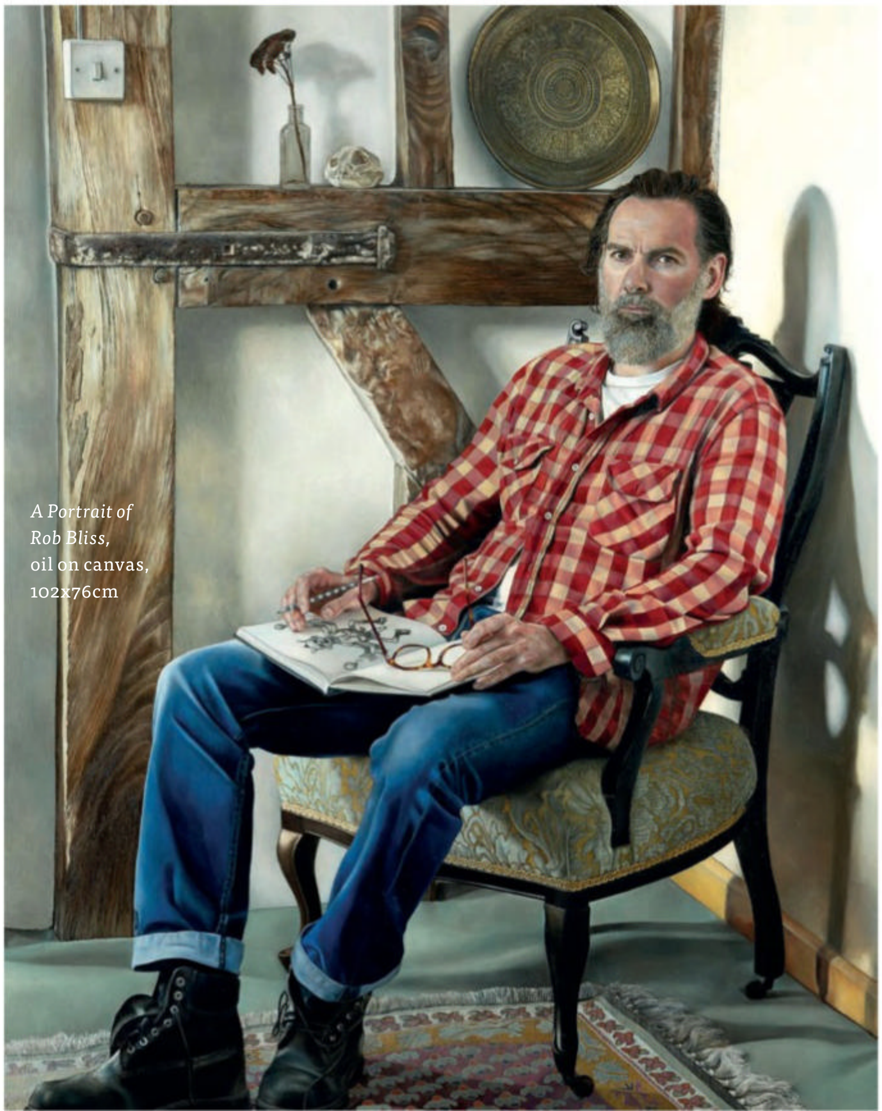


Blink & You'll Miss It, oil on canvas, 30x24cm

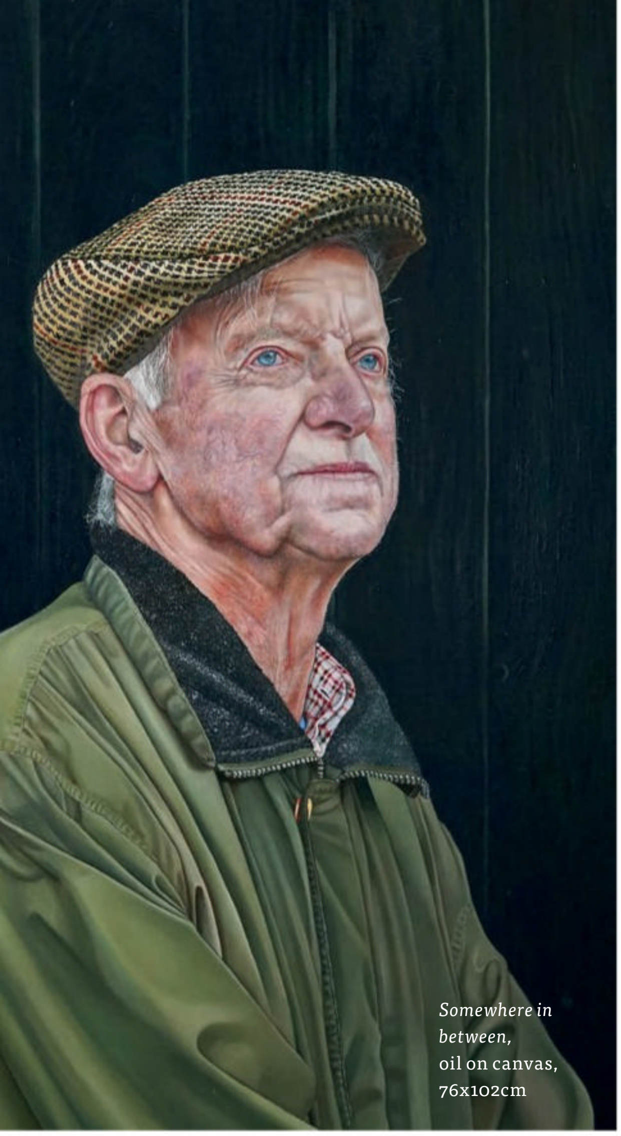




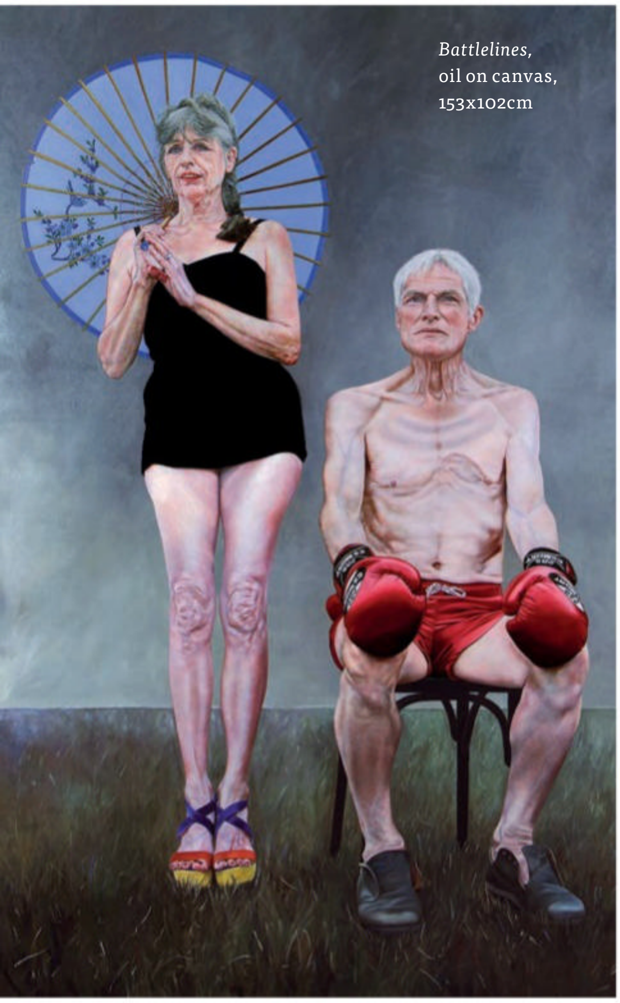
Here I Am Laurel, oil on canvas, 153x102cm



A Portrait of Rob Bliss, oil on canvas, 102x76cm



Somewhere in between,
oil on canvas,
76x102cm



Battlelines,
oil on canvas,
153x102cm

never just a face, after all. It's a story and, in the end, it's about drawing connections between humans: from one to another.

I'll always lean more towards portraits of older people because painting wrinkly, characterful faces is pure joy but, more than that, faces really weather history and I love capturing that in paint.
Whilst I've never been interested in painting landscapes, I draw a lot of inspiration from the environments around me. Leaving London and moving to rural Shropshire has given me an abundance of paint-worthy landscapes, but I suppose these views help me in a different way. The land here gives me the space and peace to really consider what it is I want to put out into the world.

When I left film and started painting again, for the first year I really got caught up in a world where I was painting what I thought people wanted.
By the way, never do that. It comes across in your work and at best will always just feel like an ill-fitting shoe. Then someone told me, "Paint what you know." So that's what I did. I started painting my older family members, anyone who was willing to sit. It was fun and playful and really brought me back to the core of what I love about painting. That is, connections and storytelling.

It's funny because at school we were always taught to paint with acrylic, but once I started using oils, there was no going back.
I love how creamy oils can get and that you can just push them around the canvas with ease. There's a vibrancy in oil paint that I've never succeeded in matching with acrylic or watercolour.

I'm now lucky enough to be able to paint every day.
When I left film, I still had a toe or two in the water for a few years and straddled it part-time with painting. Over the last ten years, however, I've really been able to focus entirely on painting, with commissions at the backbone.

The concept of style.
I've always struggled with this idea. If I look back over the years, my work has changed so much, and it still continues to evolve. I suspect the hundreds of hours you put into honing your craft, the countless failures and corrections of, "oh, this didn't work so well, I'll try something else", has led my work to some kind of consistency in how I apply paint and how it appears on the canvas. It has always had an element of realism but it's more illustrative up close. There are lots of scratchy little marks usually loomed over by a graphic silhouette. Overall, I guess my style is more to do with the subject matter I paint. I'll always portray older people with stories to tell.

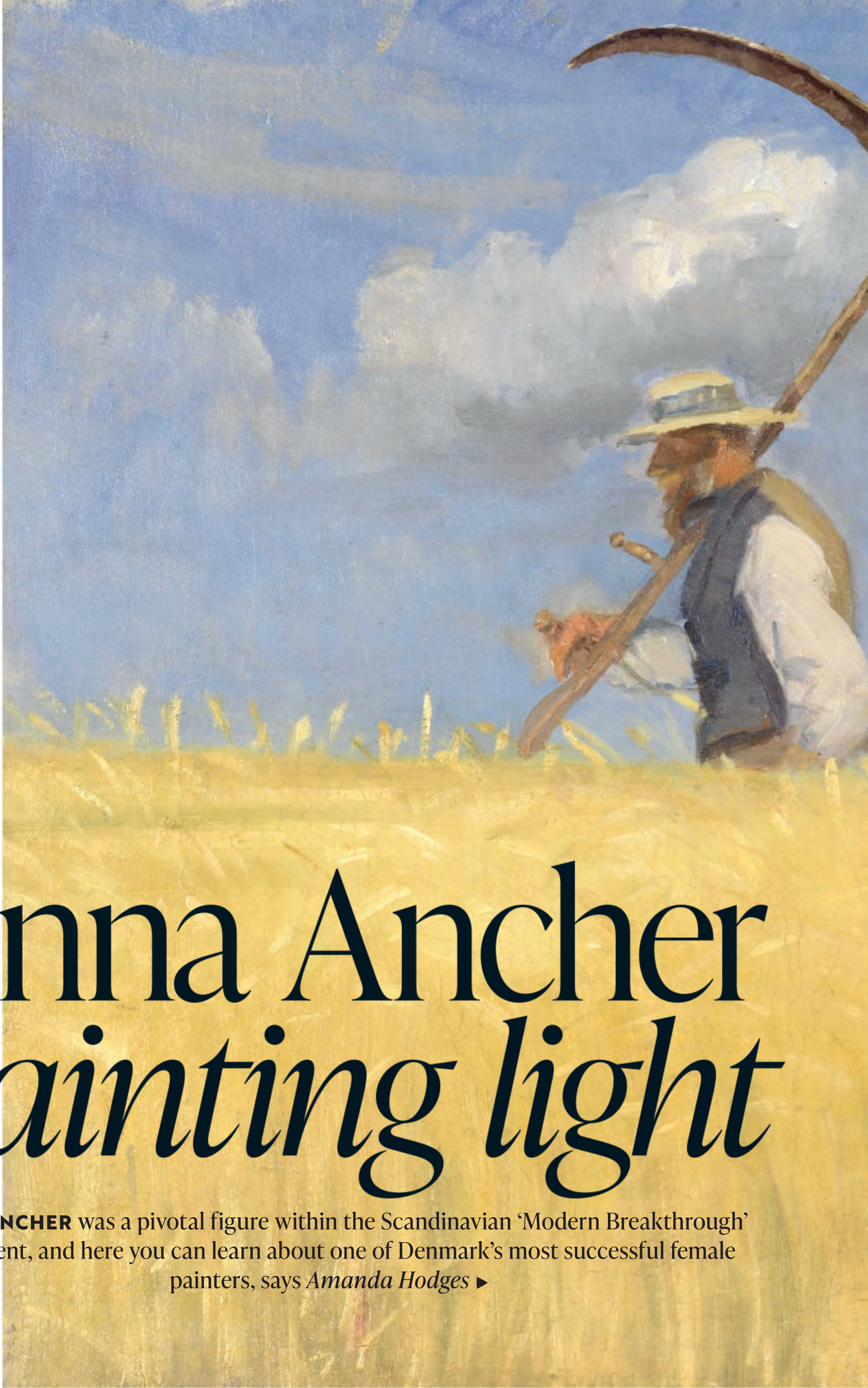
It's obvious: I'm completely influenced by older people, especially women.
Some of the women I've met throughout my life have inspired me in everything that I do. My wonderful mum. Maria Djurkovic, the award-winning designer and my mentor, was the reason I stayed in film for as long as I did. The inimitable Marise Voskens, who champions the arts in everything she does. And all the women who I continue to paint.

In terms of artists, it's a bit like my music taste.
Far and wide and everything in between. I became obsessed with Norman Rockwell and his ability to compose, since first seeing a collection of his work at the Guggenheim, New York, when I was seventeen. He was the reason I pursued illustration as he was a sort of crossover of the two worlds. Ishbel Myerscough is a huge influence, as is Jenny Saville and David Hockney, Egon Schiele and Ron Mueck. The list is endless.

Ultimately, behind everything I do is the desire to bring connections to people.
Whether it's the onlooker, the subject or the narrative within the portrait itself. More specifically, my work explores ageing and the stories of people that otherwise might be lost. My hope is that my direct portrayals of the elderly force you to address the conversation around society's representation of the ageing population and celebrate their wealth of life experience through paint. In creating nuanced allegories, building tension around confrontation, vulnerability and playfulness, I hope that it somehow allows you to connect with these characters, their physicality and life force.

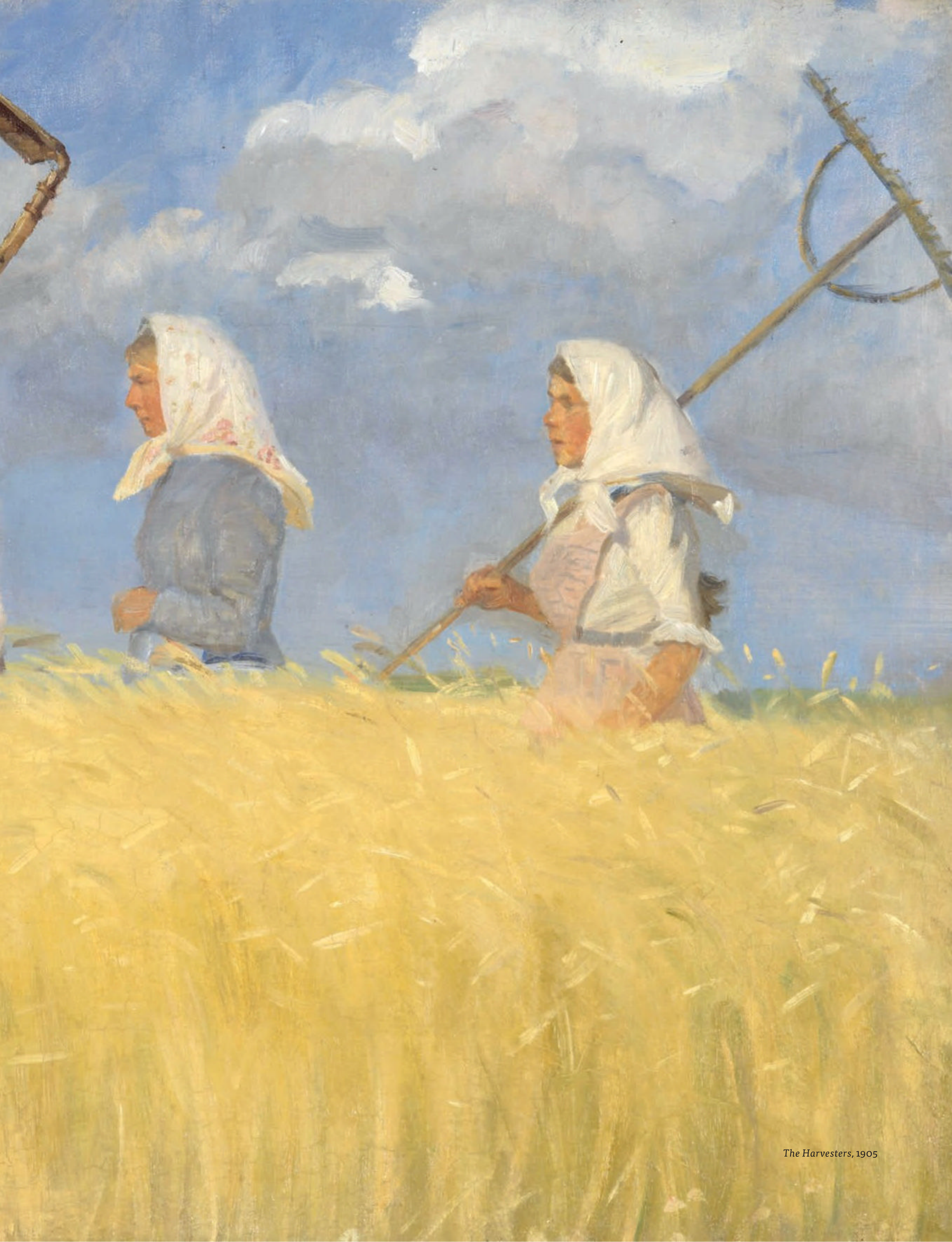
Other than getting to slosh paint around a canvas all day, the best thing about what I do is the people I meet and learning about their life stories.
It's grounding. It's inspiring. It's thought provoking. It gives me perspective of my own life. It's fun. It's funny. It's challenging. But mostly, what a privilege it is that strangers would open their homes and hearts and trust me to paint them as I see them, inside and out. ◻

COURTESY OF SKAGENS MUSEUM



Anna Ancher *Painting light*

ANNA ANCHER was a pivotal figure within the Scandinavian 'Modern Breakthrough' movement, and here you can learn about one of Denmark's most successful female painters, says *Amanda Hodges* ▸



The Harvesters, 1905

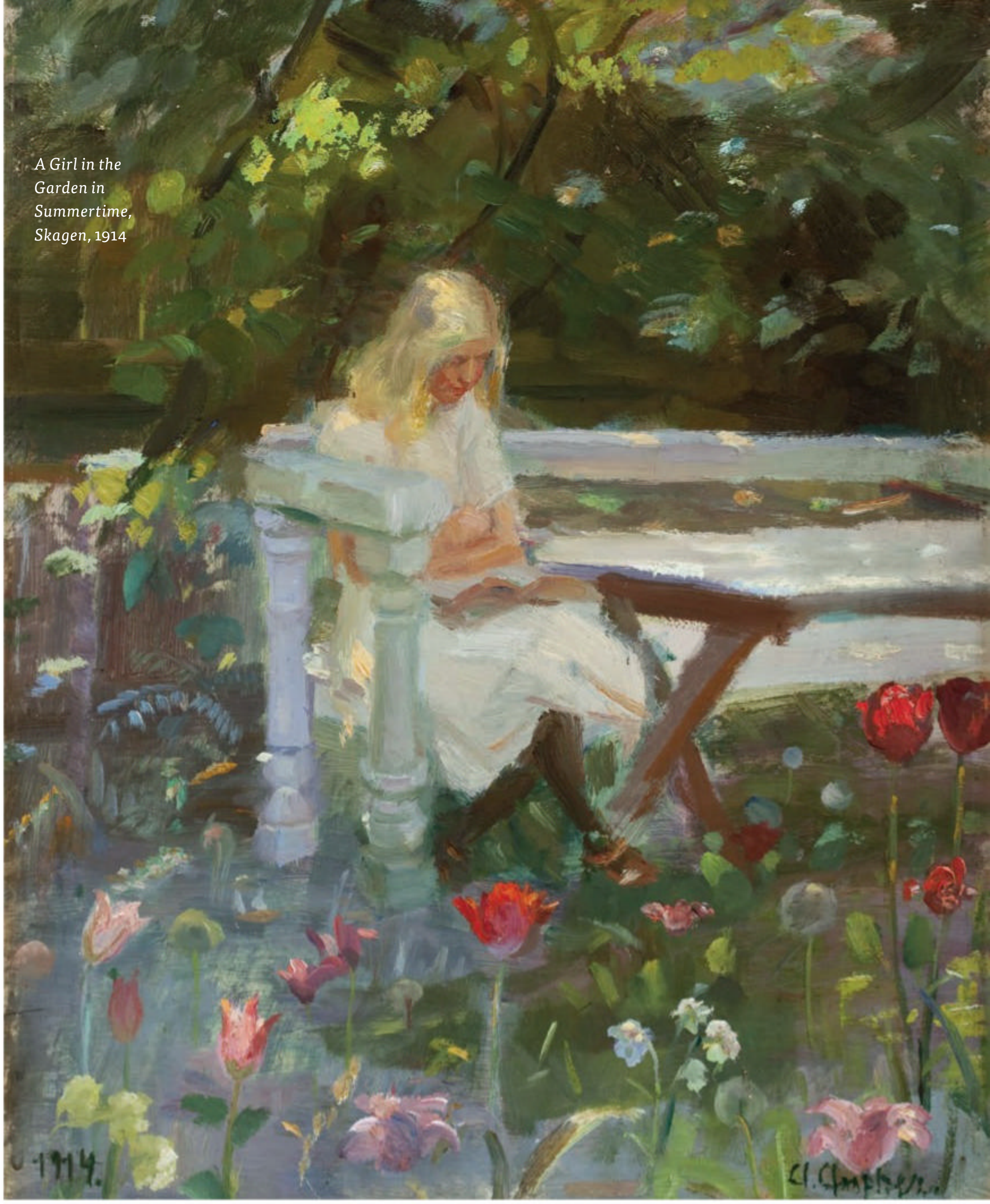
The name of Anna Ancher is one that may not currently resonate here in the United Kingdom but this will hopefully change if Dulwich Picture Gallery's new exhibition succeeds in its objective to bring her work to a broader audience. Jennifer Scott, Dulwich's Director, hails it as being a, "landmark exhibition celebrating Ancher, whose luminous works distinguish her as a pioneering modern painter." Much celebrated in her native Denmark for her stunning depiction of interior scenes and her magical use of light, Ancher's work certainly merits wider appreciation.

This presentation is a joint venture with Skagens Museum, of which Anna Ancher's husband was an original founding member in 1908. Lisette Vind Ebbesen is its current Director. "It's an immense pleasure for us to collaborate with Dulwich," she says. "We consider Ancher one of the most important Danish painters of her time and so did her contemporaries. Her colours, motifs and style resembled none of them and still seem unique and fresh so many years later. We believe she has much to offer the world and are very excited to contribute to the first UK showing."

Why the decision to present her work now? "Quite simply, we felt that Anna Ancher was long overdue recognition on an international stage," says Dulwich Head of Collection curator, Helen Hillyard. "When you see her works, you cannot help but be drawn in by them; they are so vibrant and luminous yet, at the same time, so intimate. However, our idea only truly came to life once we had the support of Skagens Museum, who are lending the majority of works and without whom the exhibition wouldn't be possible."

And as to why Ancher's renown hasn't extended further, Hillyard reflects: "It's hard to say why Ancher is less well known here; perhaps it's because her works are predominantly held by Danish collections. It may also be because our focus for art in this period tends to be dominated by France, and Paris in particular. Hopefully, this exhibition will expand our understanding of Impressionism and its borders."

Designer Coco Chanel once declared that, "An interior is the natural projection of the soul," and Ancher's work - usually done in the medium of oils and chronicling the daily life of fishermen, women and children in Skagen - profoundly reflects this maxim. With a confident use of colour, she beautifully blends intimate interiors with more avant-garde European


A Girl in the Garden in Summertime, Skagen, 1914

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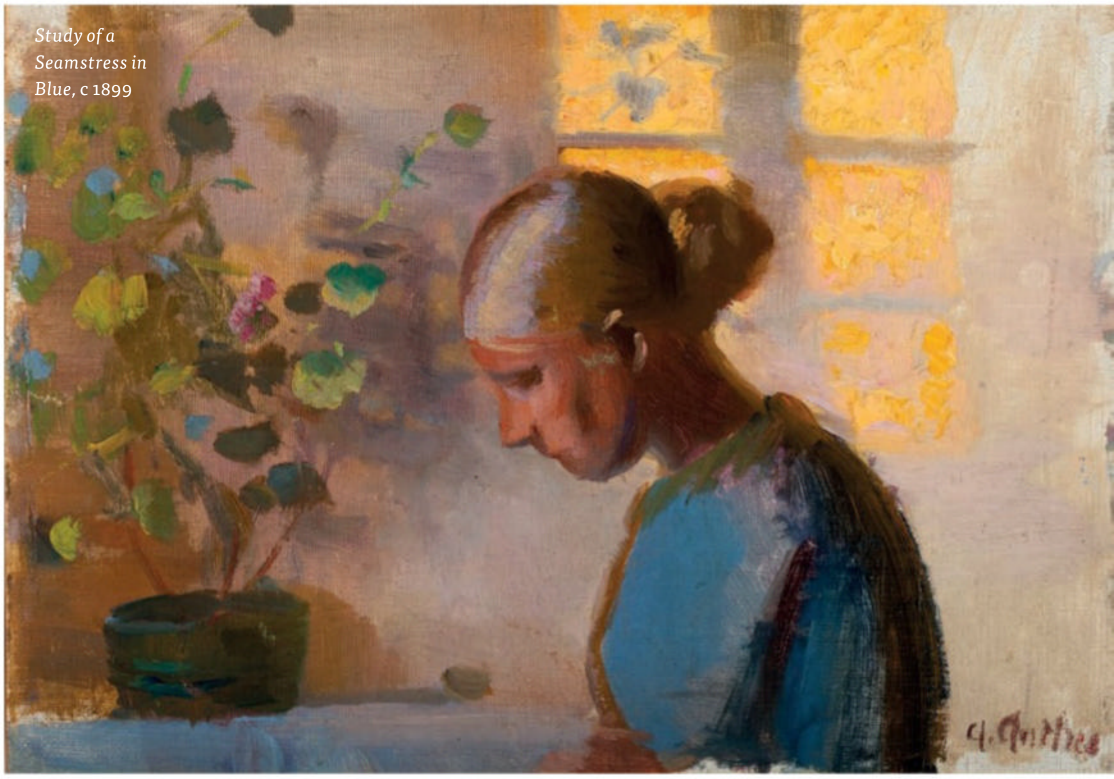
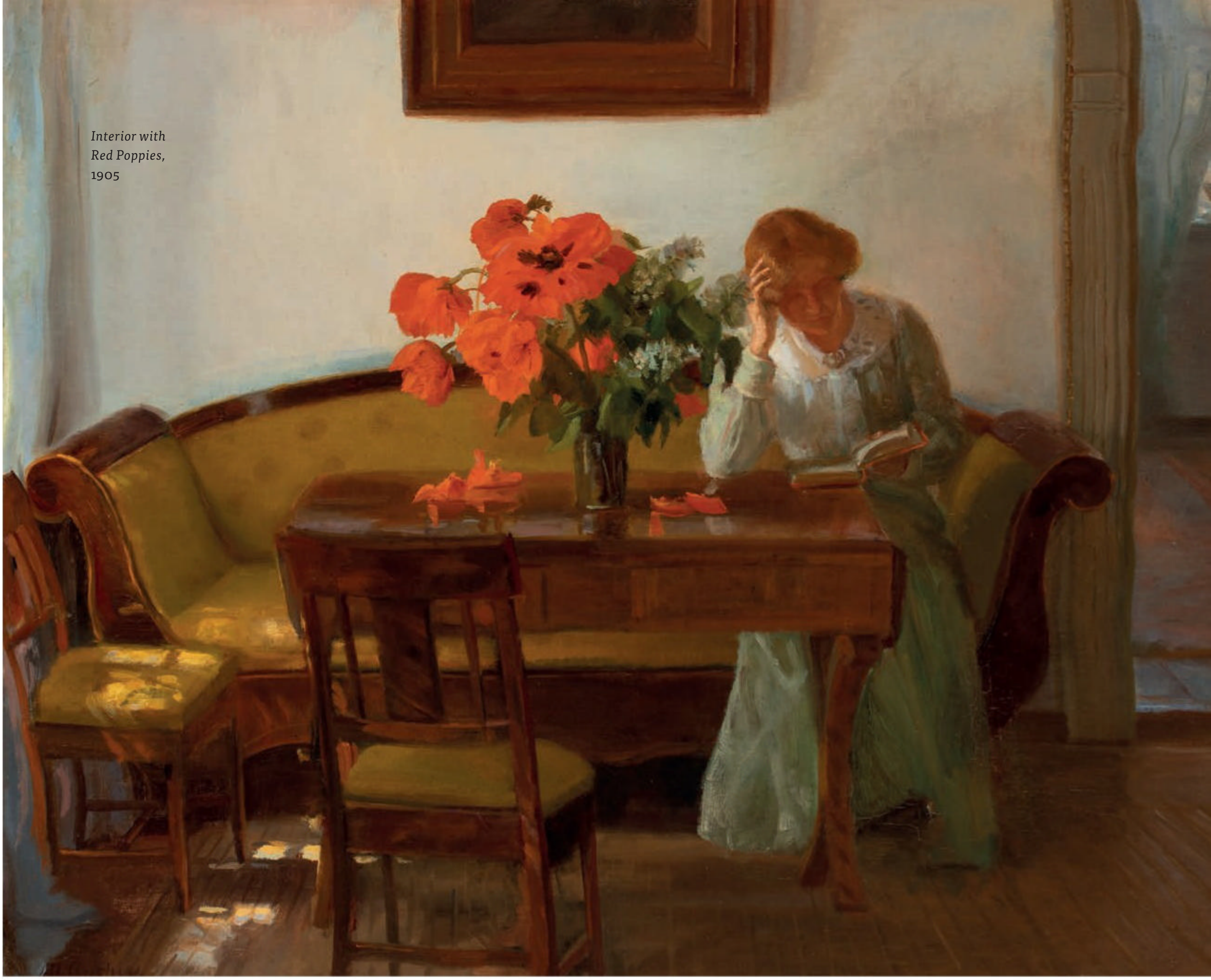

Study of a Seamstress in Blue, c 1899



Interior with Red Poppies, 1905

COURTESY OF SKAGENS MUSEUM

influences. Recently, the scope of her work has been bolstered by the acquisition of other paintings capturing a variety of outdoor scenes. "In 2014, a collection of virtually unknown oil studies was discovered at the artist's house," says Hillyard. "A large number depict the distinctive, rugged scenery of Skagen. These works give a unique insight into Ancher's artistic practice, especially as many were never intended to be seen by a public audience. They have also shifted our broader understanding of Ancher's output and challenged those who might view her only as a painter of domestic scenes, a label often used, unfairly, to pigeonhole the work of female artists."

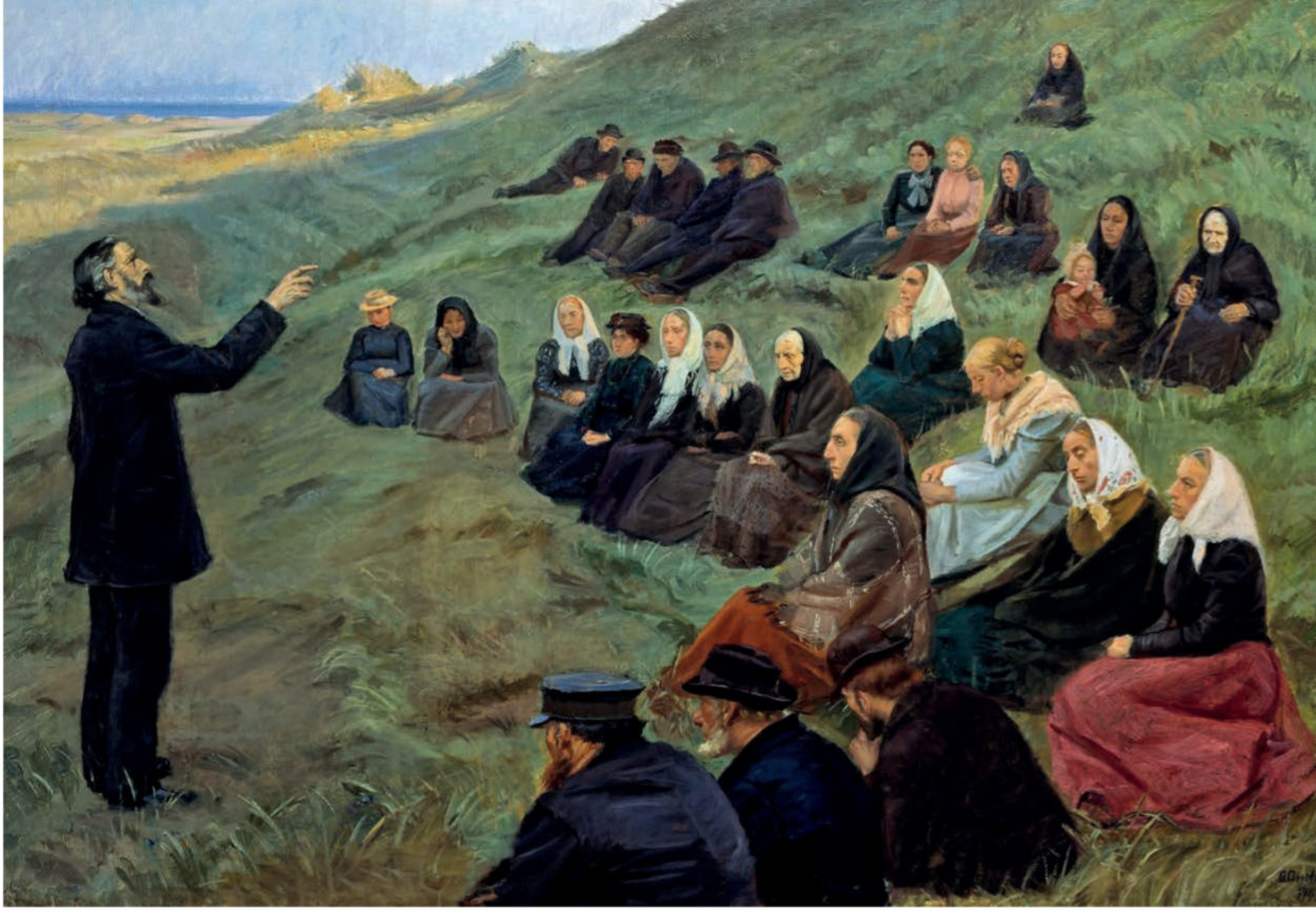
Born Anna Brøndum in 1859, Ancher grew up in the fishing village of Skagen, the daughter of the local innkeepers, possessing a deep affection for the area and its artists' colony, known as the Skagen Painters, who congregated at the inn. She is considered a pivotal figure within the Scandinavian 'Modern Breakthrough' movement - a period of heightened naturalism placing a focus on contemporary life. The majority of Ancher's works revolve around Skagen and she naturally gravitated towards using locals as her models.

Her style incorporated elements of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism

"Her family, her mother, daughter, sisters and husband - also a famous artist - frequently feature in her art," explains Helen Hillyard. "And the concept of 'home' was clearly important to her work. Of all the painters that came to Skagen, Anna Ancher was the only one born and raised in the town. In many ways, the colony built itself around her."

Yet, despite her strong local roots, Ancher also attended art school in Copenhagen and visited Europe in the 1880s. "Influenced by travels to France, Ancher developed a distinctive approach that translated the colour and atmospheric effects of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism into a Scandinavian context. Her interest in light was constant and unparalleled among Danish artists," says Hillyard. "She was interested in capturing light at different times of day, often depicting the same subject multiple times with only subtle variations." This is reminiscent of Monet's fascination with the subtlety of light.

Anna Ancher was one of the few women in this era who found a way to continue her career after marriage, a true pioneer in this respect. "The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art was closed to women until 1888," explains Hillyard. "Ancher was certainly not the only female artist active in Denmark during this period, but she was ▶

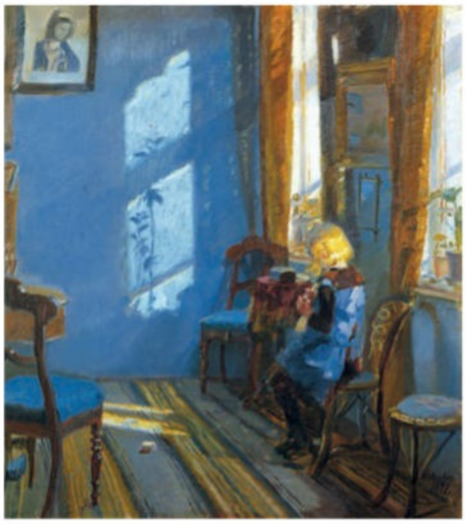


COURTESY OF SKAGENS MUSEUM

undoubtedly the most successful. In forging her career, she subverted many of the gendered expectations of the period."

Ancher was fortunate in having a sympathetic spouse. She married another painter, Michael Ancher, and they hosted numerous gatherings at their home. Early on she was influenced by other painters of the group, but quickly developed her own distinct style, which incorporated elements of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. Michael was always supportive of her career, which wasn't necessarily a given at a time when married middle-class women were not expected to pursue a profession. Even Anna Ancher's art teacher had told her to throw her paintbox into the sea after the birth of her daughter. Both Anna and Michael feature as models in each other's works, such as in *Lunch Before the Hunt* (1903) where she depicts the artist at the table in their front room. This is, as Hillyard asserts, "a rare example of a male painter through the lens of a female artist. She gained international recognition within her lifetime and in turn pushed her husband to be more progressive in his approach to painting."

And what might someone new to Ancher, visiting the Dulwich Picture Gallery, find as a good introduction to her work? "*Sunlight in the Blue Room* (1891) is one of Ancher's most important paintings, which visitors encounter in the exhibition's first room," suggests Helen Hillyward. "Ancher depicts her daughter Helga within the Blue Room of Brøndums Hotel, the inn run by Ancher's parents. The work demonstrates the artist's distinctive approach to light, which becomes almost tangible, illustrated with thickly painted squares on the back wall of the room." In addition, Ancher was also influenced by Japanese prints. "She and her husband owned a complete edition of Katsushika Hokusai's manga books and strong diagonals dominate the composition.



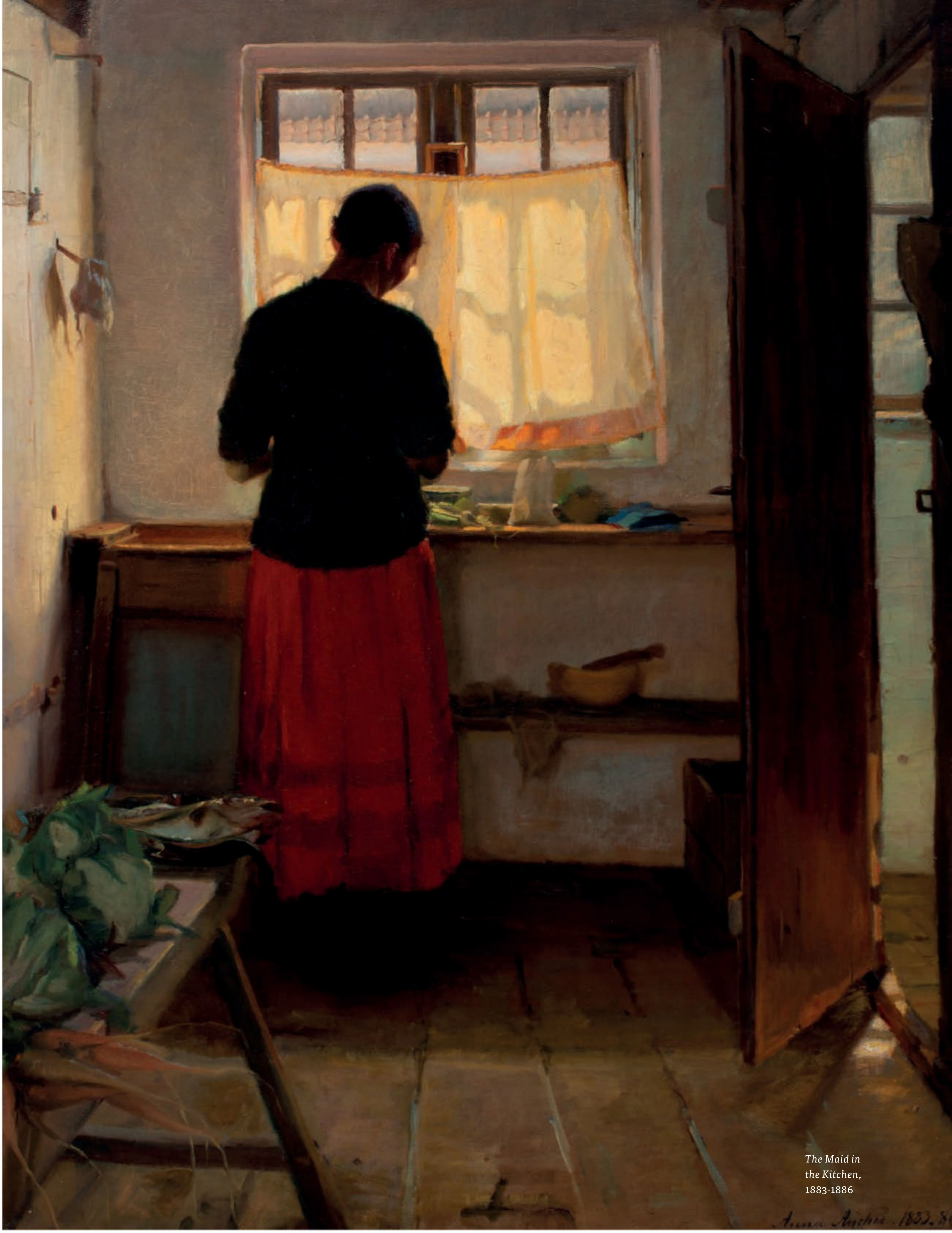
COURTESY OF SKAGENS MUSEUM

TOP *A Field Sermon*, 1903 **ABOVE** *Sunlight in the Blue Room*, 1891, oil on canvas

Interestingly, when the painting was first exhibited in Copenhagen in 1892, it received mixed reactions. An anonymous critic complained that certain artists had become 'too modern' and should leave their paintings at home in the private confines of their studio."

Today Ancher's art remains truly compelling, offering a blend of what Helen Hillyard calls "something familiar yet radical," all rendered in exquisite detail. "Unlike many female painters of her generation, Anna Ancher was never 'lost' to art history," says Hillyard. "Nevertheless, she has not yet received the recognition that she deserves and so I'm really looking forward to seeing how audiences react to Ancher's works. She's such a visionary artist and, even today, her paintings feel so fresh." One of Hillyard's own favourite works is *Evening Sun in the Artist's Studio at Markvej* (c.1913). "It's so bold you might be forgiven for thinking you're looking at an abstract expressionist painting. She paid such close attention to the environment in which she lived, and I hope that the exhibition will inspire visitors to reflect on their own homes and localities in new and creative ways."

Anna Ancher: Painting Light, 4 November 2025 – 8 March 2026, Dulwich Picture Gallery dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk ◻


Anna Ancher 1883.86

The Maid in the Kitchen, 1883-1886

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Judging for this year's British Art Prize has now closed, and we have our shortlist of 50. The winners will be revealed in the next issue of *Artists & Illustrators* but, for now, we'd like to get *you* voting for The People's Choice Award!

The acclaimeded judging panel for The British Art Prize – made up of watercolour master Alvaro Castagnet, *The One Show's* Artist in Residence and President of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters, Adebanje Alade, Dr Amy Orrock, Curator for the National Trust, Tiffany Hall, co-founder of Panter & Hall gallery, and Niki Browes, the editor of this magazine – have painstakingly cast their votes and the winners have been decided. The big reveal will be in the next issue but, for now, we'd like to get *you* involved.

This is your chance to vote for your favourite painting from the 50 artworks shortlisted and shown opposite. To cast your vote and view every artwork up close, simply follow the link (below right). When the deadline closes on 7th November, the recipient of the most public votes will be named The People's Choice Award winner. Their prize will be a Huion Kamvas Pro 19 pen display tablet, worth £1,099, and a feature in the February issue of *Artists & Illustrators*. Vote for your favourite today!

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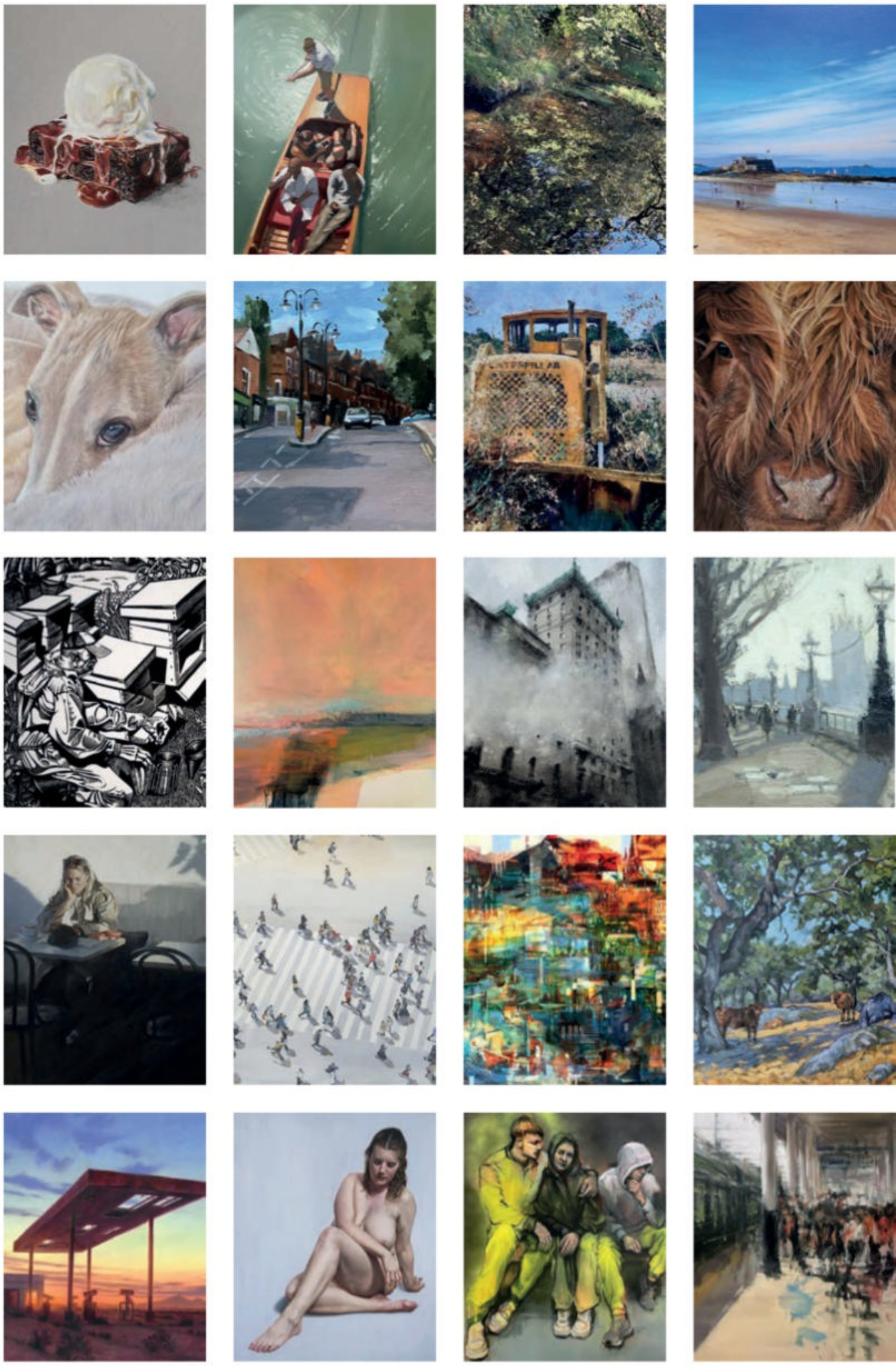

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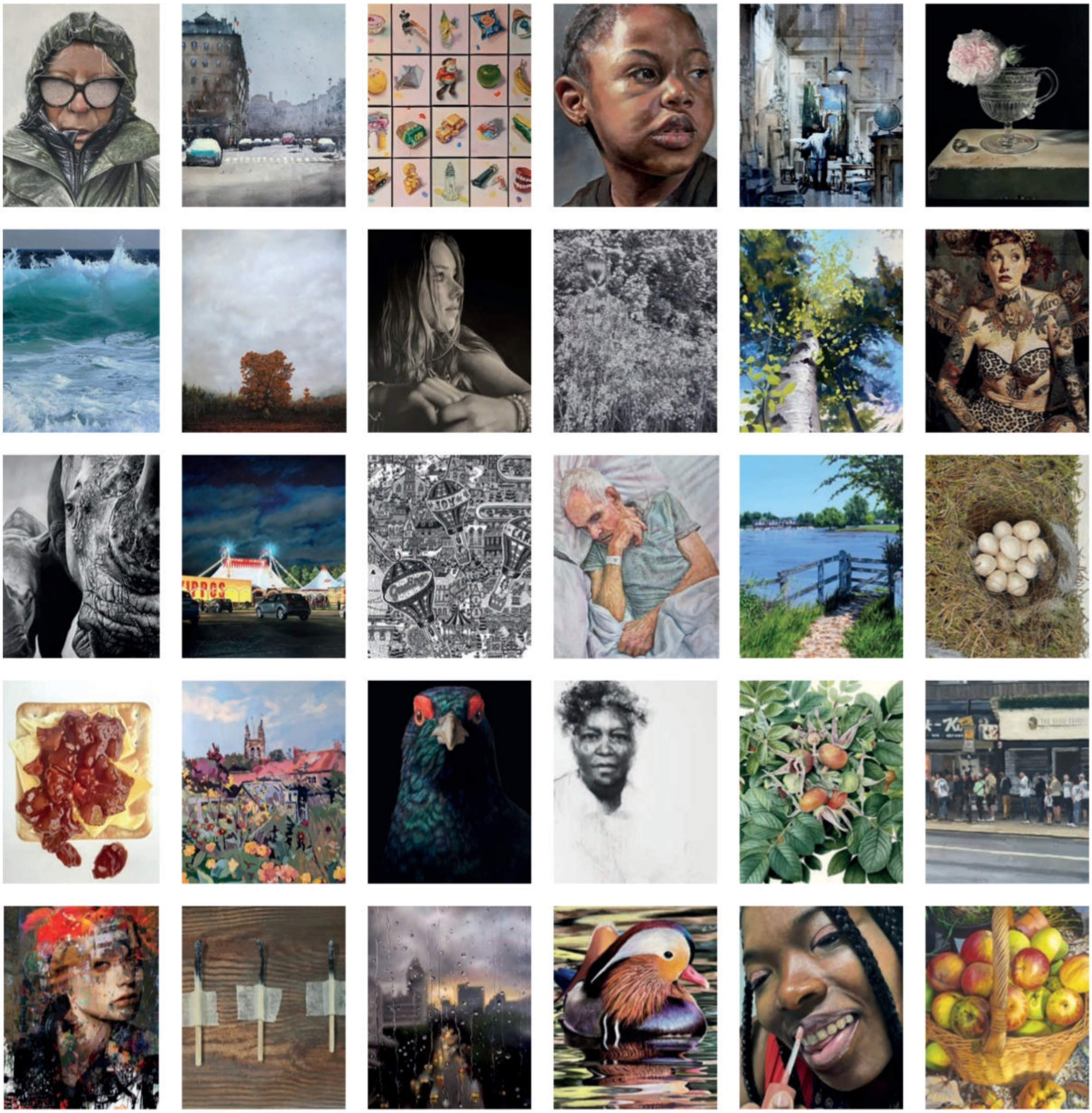

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STEP-BY-STEP studio

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO PAINT AND CREATE

British Art Club member **ANN FLYNN** is an oil artist who specialises in atmospheric street and seascapes, and still life paintings in oil. Here, she shares what she has learnt along the way

1

Oil paint is a versatile medium, but it needs patience and hard work to improve your skills
Educate yourself with tutorials on platforms like YouTube, follow other artists for inspiration and sign yourself up for workshops whenever possible. As artists, we are always learning; it's key to growing as a painter.

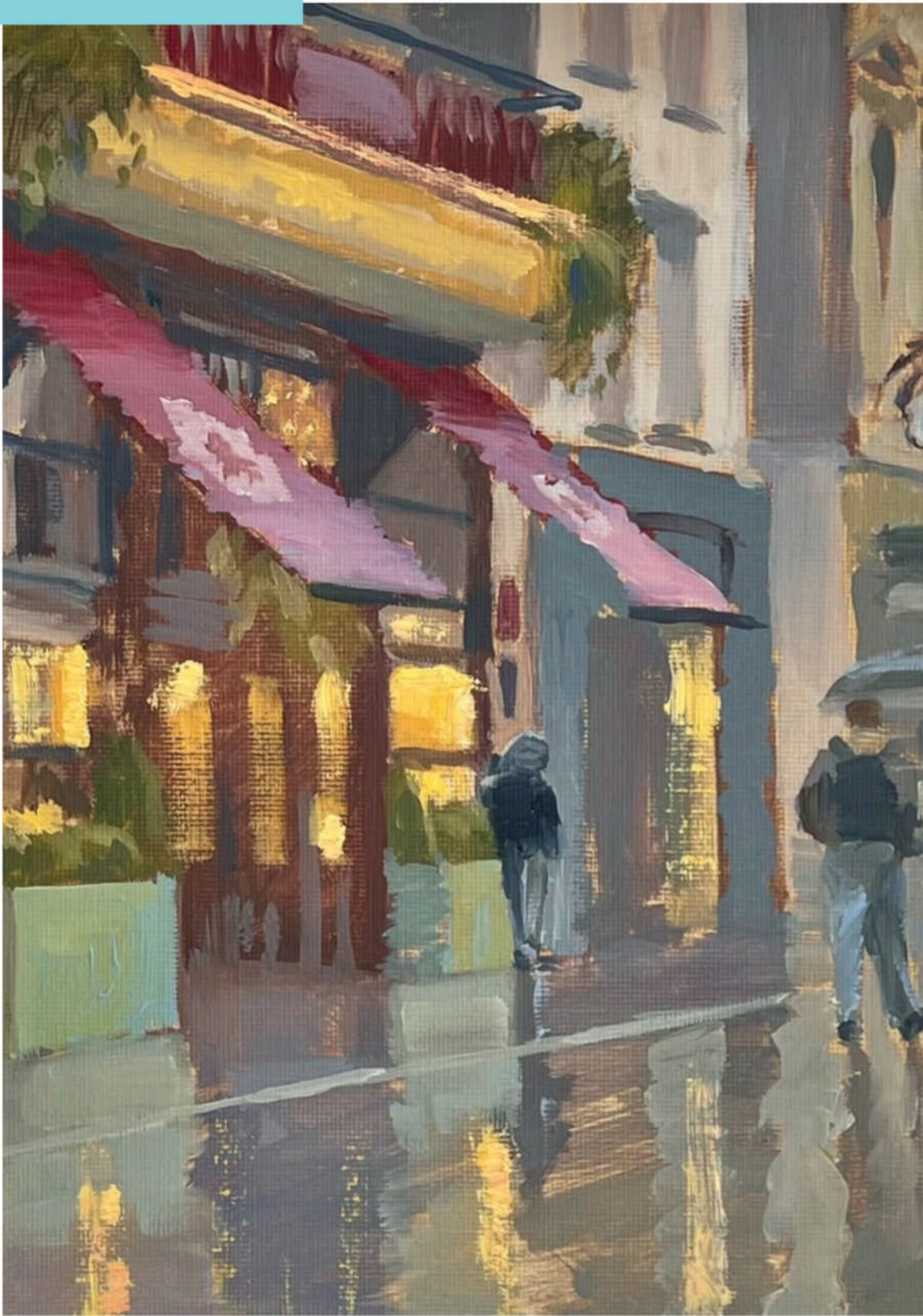
2

Paint, paint, paint
Small colour studies are an important part of how I develop ideas. They are quick, experimental pieces where I can play around with composition, tone and value without stressing about the final result. I like using them as a warm-up at the start of the day.

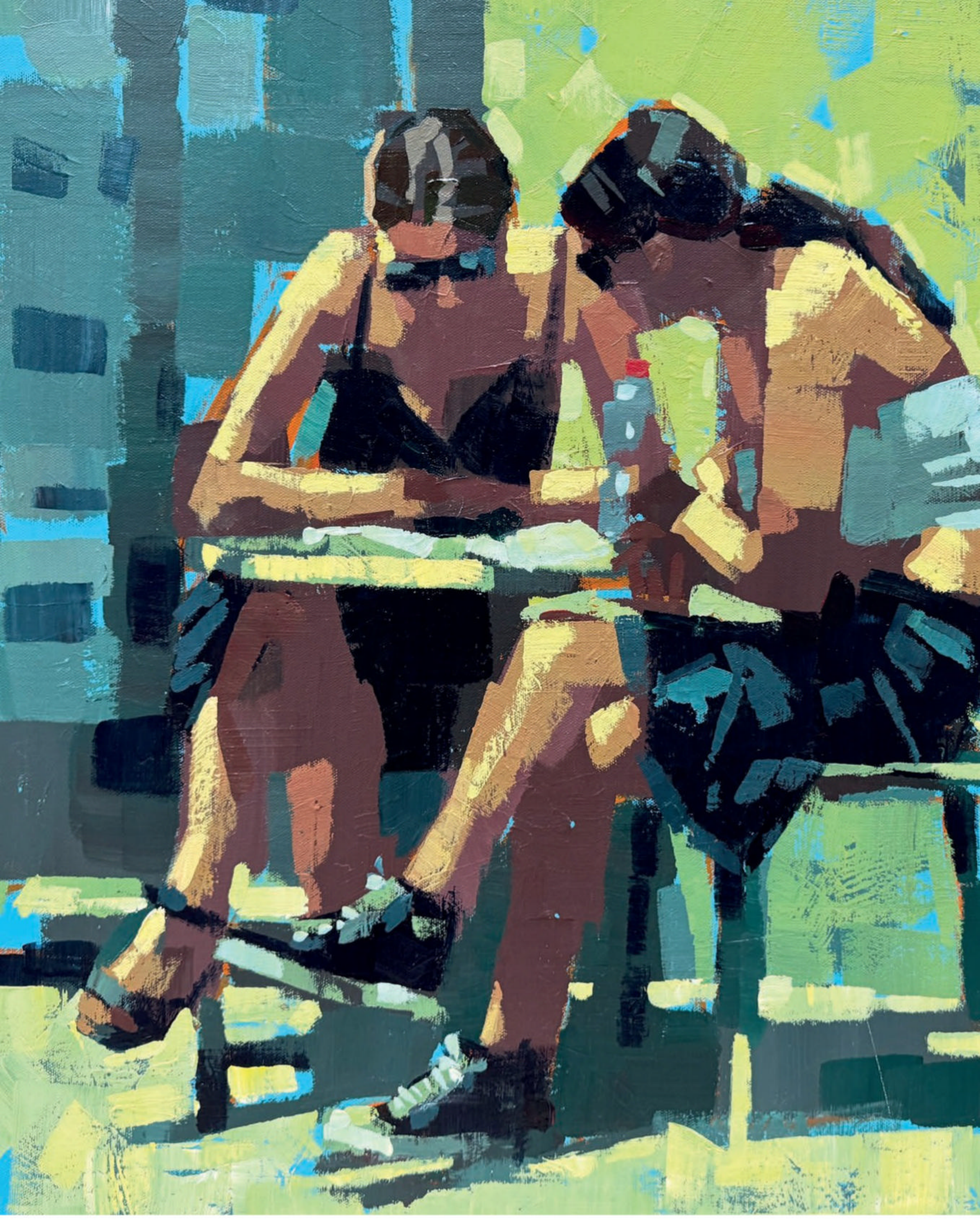
3

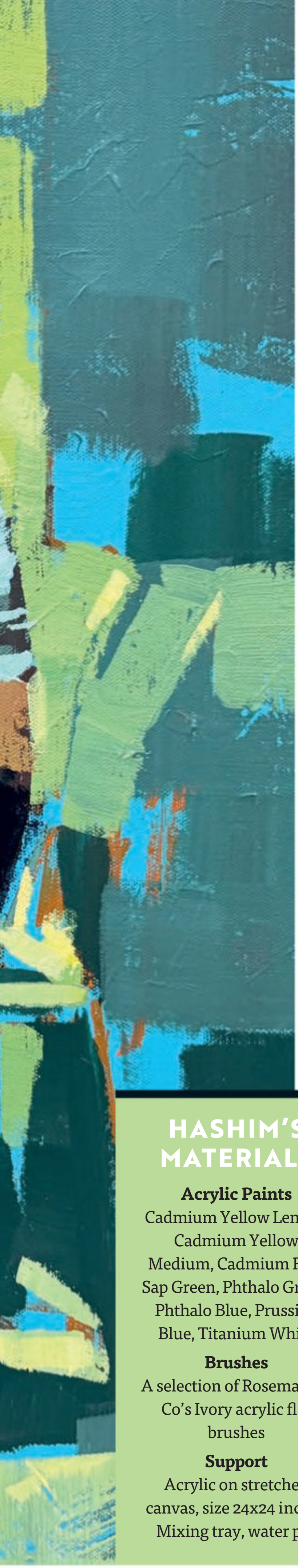
Think of your practice as a business, not just a creative outlet
Stay on top of deadlines, sales, submissions and finances. Your creativity is what drives you but being organised and professional will help you in the long run and take the stress out of the trade side of things.

annflynn.com



BEWLEYS, GRAFTON STREET DUBLIN, OIL ON PANEL, 25X30CM





Reading between the lines

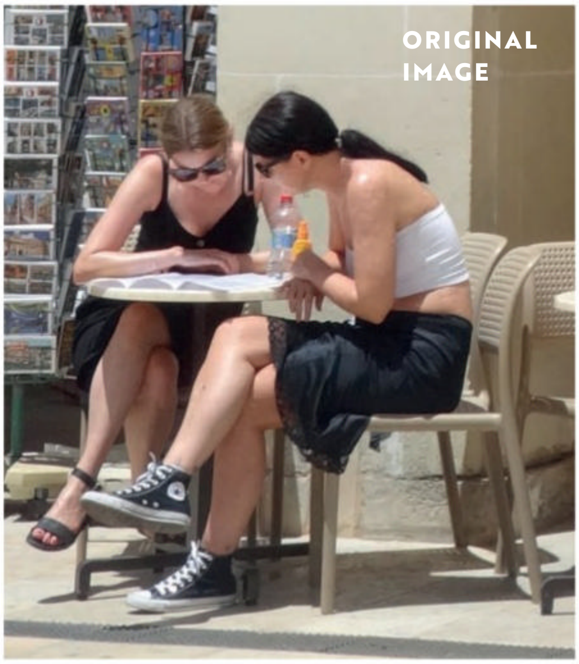
HASHIM AKIB introduces the beauty of working with flat colours in the final instalment of his brilliant acrylic series

HASHIM'S MATERIALS

Acrylic Paints
Cadmium Yellow Lemon, Cadmium Yellow Medium, Cadmium Red, Sap Green, Phthalo Green, Phthalo Blue, Prussian Blue, Titanium White

Brushes
A selection of Rosemary & Co's Ivory acrylic flat brushes

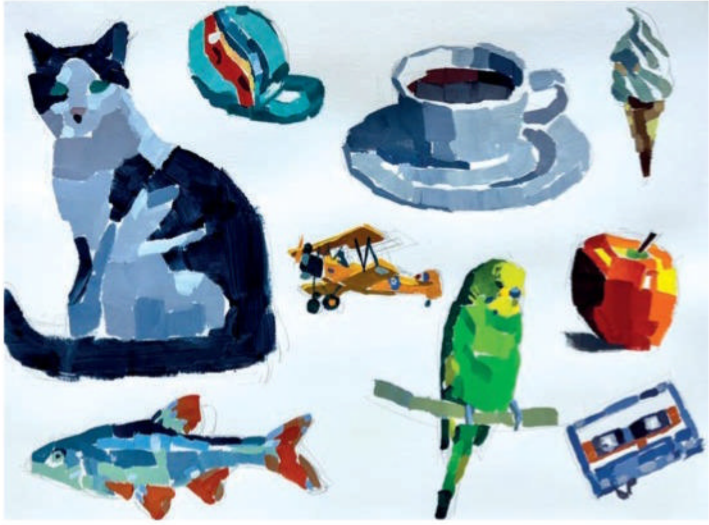
Support
Acrylic on stretched canvas, size 24x24 inches
Mixing tray, water pot



SOMETIMES MAKING LIFE SIMPLER FOR YOURSELF and avoiding overthinking a process gets you further. In painting terms, using flat colours does exactly that and it may even prove to hold the key to more complex ideas. In a nutshell, just mix your colours to an even shade, avoid streaking and apply or blend with other flat colours for pleasing, clean applications. Let's break down the advantages of painting in flat colours and how we can take them forward into more complex processes.

Initially, using flat colours gets you painting; there's no reason to procrastinate. Colour choices are simple: see a red ball, choose a red and apply. Add a darker shade for the base and you'll have a cleanly painted, relatively realistic red ball. Avoid over complicating things by adding unnecessary details or fancy brushwork. Do a few of these simple exercises to get you in the right mindset while building ▶

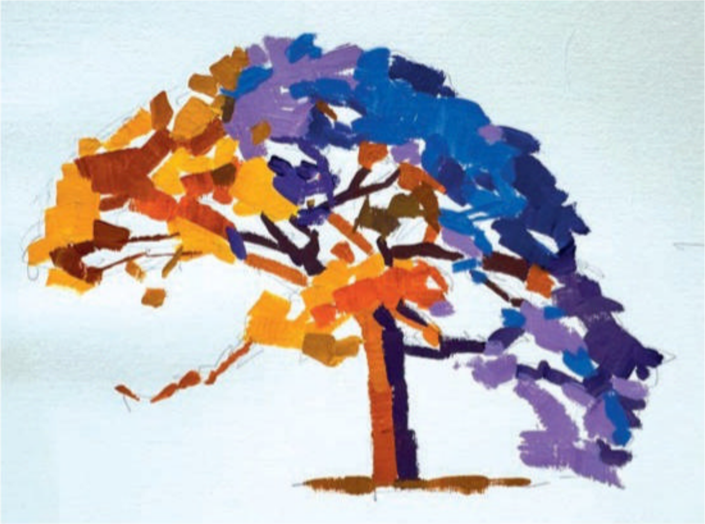
your confidence. Try simple elements, but maybe change the natural colours to something more unusual. A purple banana instead of a yellow one or a pink cat rather than a black one. Add more elements if you'd like and create a conveyor belt of paintings. Work small, on paper or panel and graduate onto canvas. Work in acrylic or watercolour for fast drying applications.



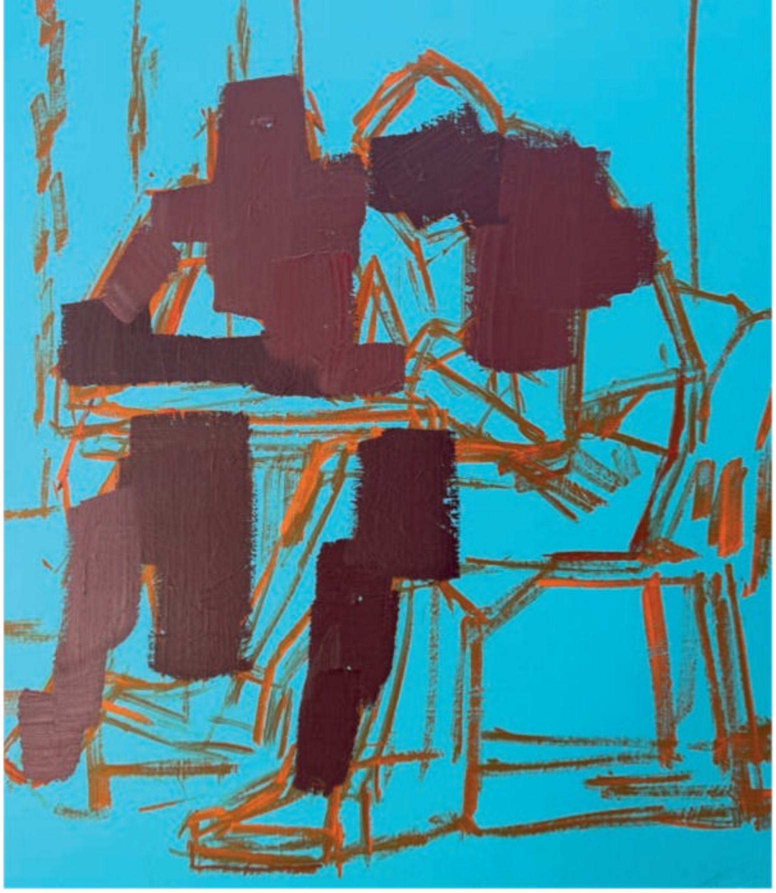
Here's a selection of random subjects I painted to get in the mood. Simple but striking.

Now you've got a little experience under your belt, let's take it to the next level. Again, try simple elements to paint - something everyday - and begin employing blocks of colour rather than blends. This will create an almost pixelated image. Again, do nothing with colour other than create a perfectly flat version of the pigment you're looking for. If you want to graduate or blend colour, just use light, medium or dark blocks next to each other and avoid that excessive brushing.

Why use blocks with flat colour? Firstly, the flat colour provides a clear narrative; no fuss, no unwanted flowery pigments or overly exuberant mark-making. The paint is a single clean ingredient that will allow the blocks to sing. The blocks are a way of describing movement, maybe angled with a clear indication that a conscious effort is made to make a mark. You could combine both large flat areas with a few blocks speckled around. The blocks don't need to be too clinical but try to be conscious of a definitive mark. ***hashimakib.co.uk***

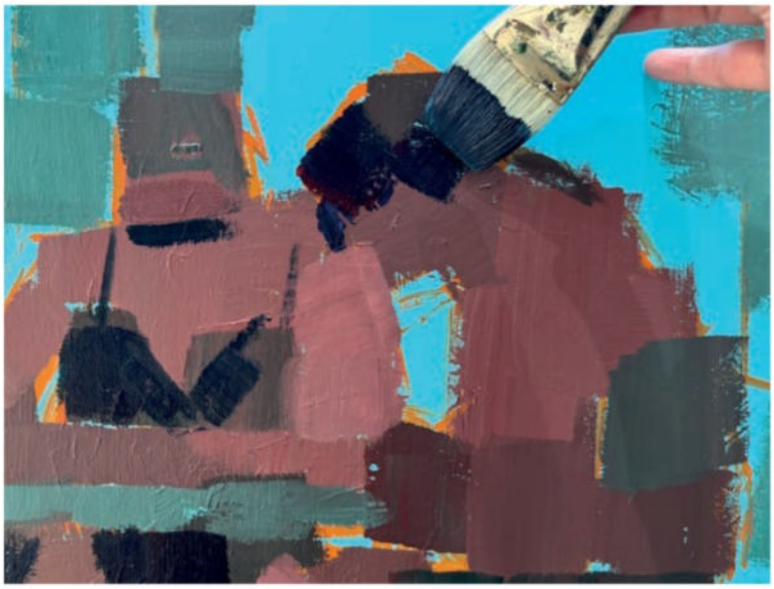


In this example I've painted a colourful tree using flat colours and I've been very conscious of the marks I've made, mainly blocks, with some line work. This offers painterly applications with some guarantee of clean colours.



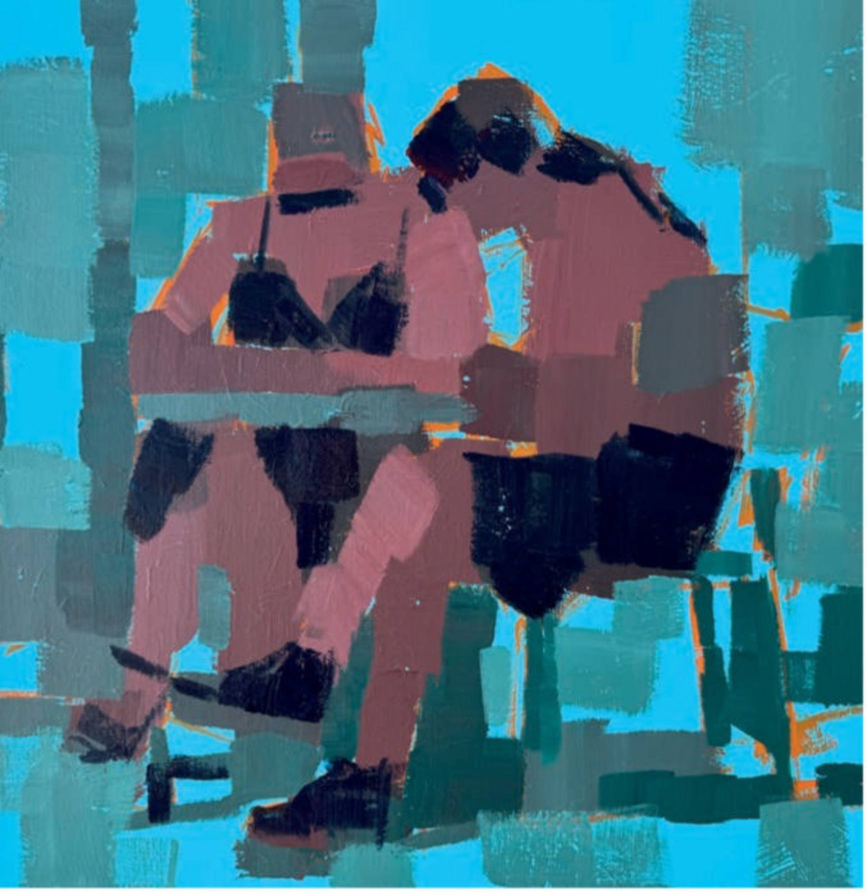
1 SKETCH THE FIGURES

For this step-by-step, we'll tackle a couple of tricky seated figures and employ all the lessons from the previous exercises by using flat colours, flat areas and some blocky marks. The result showcases an economy of mark-making and colour but still creates a convincing scene. I'm painting on canvas applied with a base colour of Cyan Blue, Yellow Ochre and Titanium White. I've sketched the figures in paint and begin by applying a variety of flat reddish brown for the figures using a 2 inch brush. I'll be working the two figures simultaneously as I'd like a connection between them and it'll be quicker. The colours are a mix of red and greens with a little Cadmium Yellow with white to soften certain tones.



2 MIX THE COLOURS TO A FLAT SHADE

I add more Phthalo Green to the reddish mix to create some darker mid tones which are then accentuated by Prussian Blue. In each case I mix the colours to a relatively flat shade on my mixing tray. I'm using larger flat brushes for these opening marks. I also mix a greenish grey from greens, Prussian Blue and Titanium White then add small amounts of reddish brown.

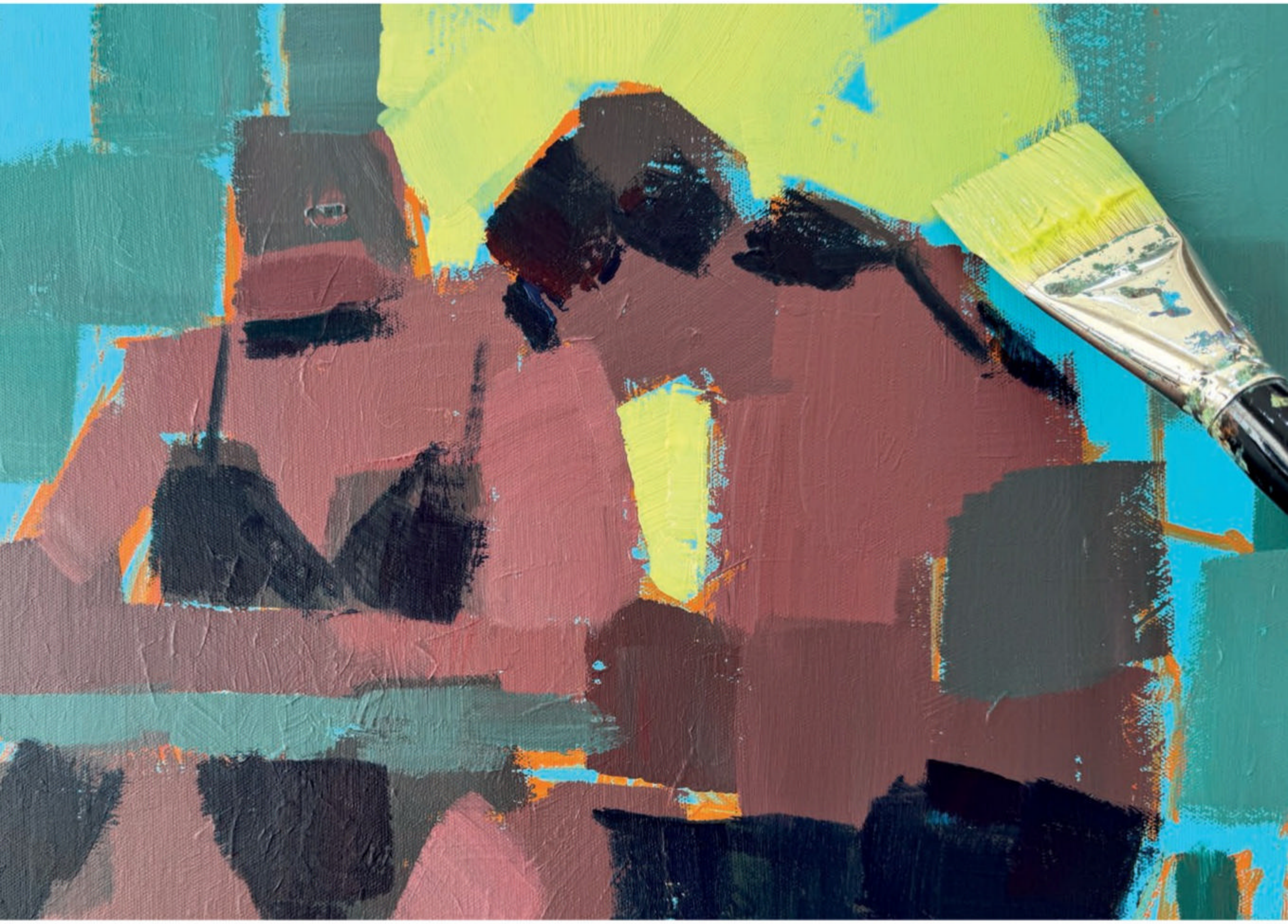


3 VARY THE FORMS

As you can tell, the initial applications are quite expressive and purely a way of establishing the main forms. I've tried to vary the tones for certain parts of the figures to create subtlety. These are flat colours next to one another rather then blended. Colours are limited to keep things simple. Varying blocks of greenish grey cover the background but I've avoided completely filling in this area.

4 LEAVE SOME BASE COLOURS ▼

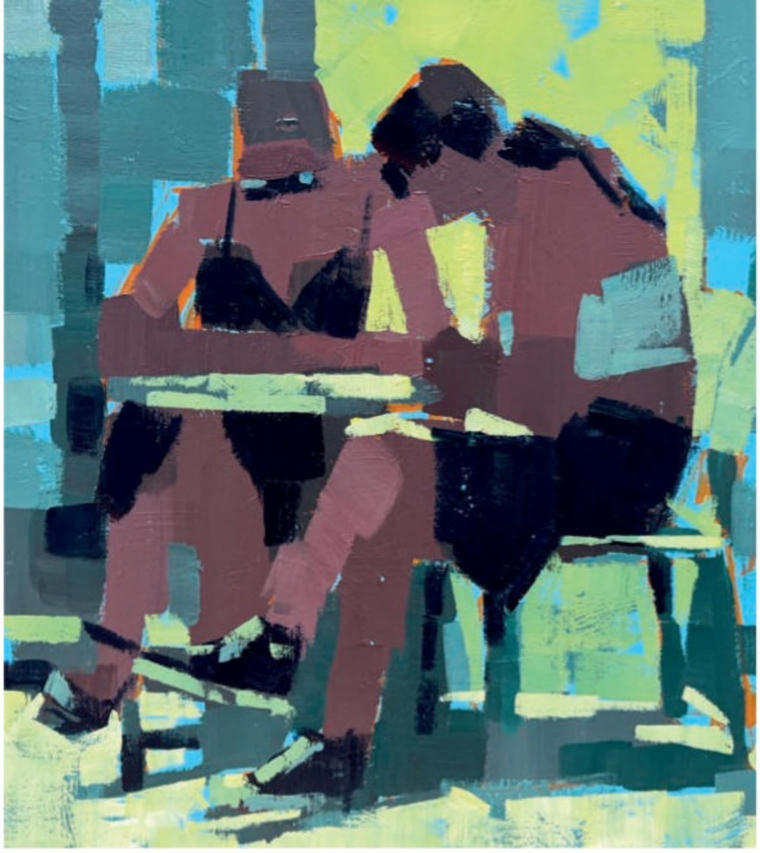
Next, I apply a light colour of yellows, Titanium White and Sap Green for the background. Again, mix the pigment to a flat colour and begin cutting around the figures using a large flat. Try leaving some base colour to break through as this creates dynamism while avoiding being too neat and tidy. I add a little greenish grey to subdue the yellow mix for less important areas in the background. ▸

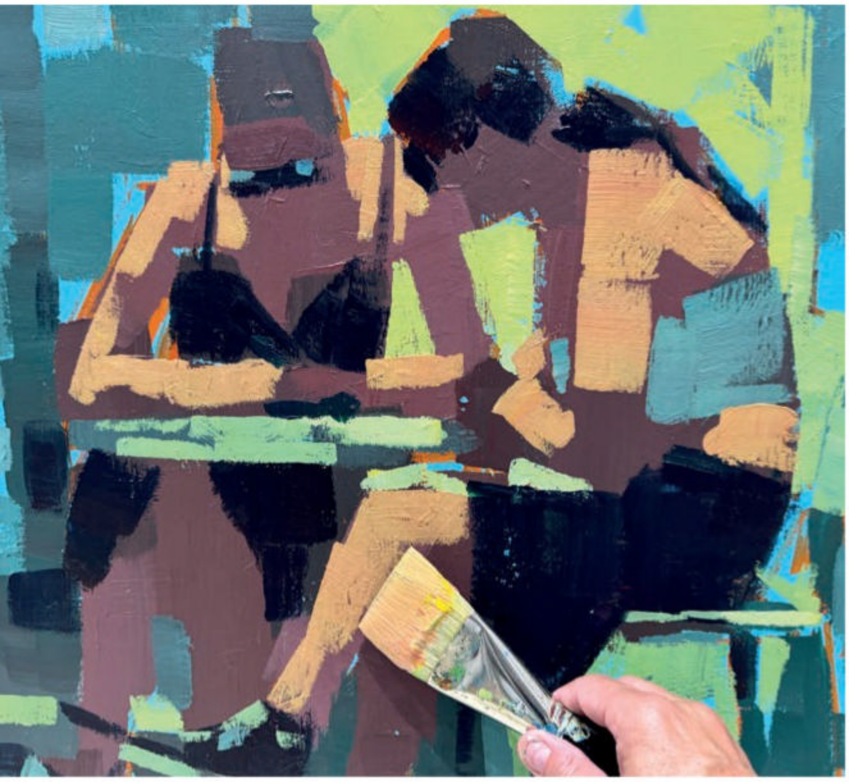


5

WATCH YOUR PAINTING START TO COME TO LIFE ▶

There's quite a dramatic difference once the yellow is applied. Some care is taken in carving out the figures and chairs. I also indicate some detail on the shoes and tabletop. I add more Titanium White in the grey-green mix to indicate the main figure's top, with additional marks in the background. On occasion, I vary the pressures applied on the brush to create some texture.





6

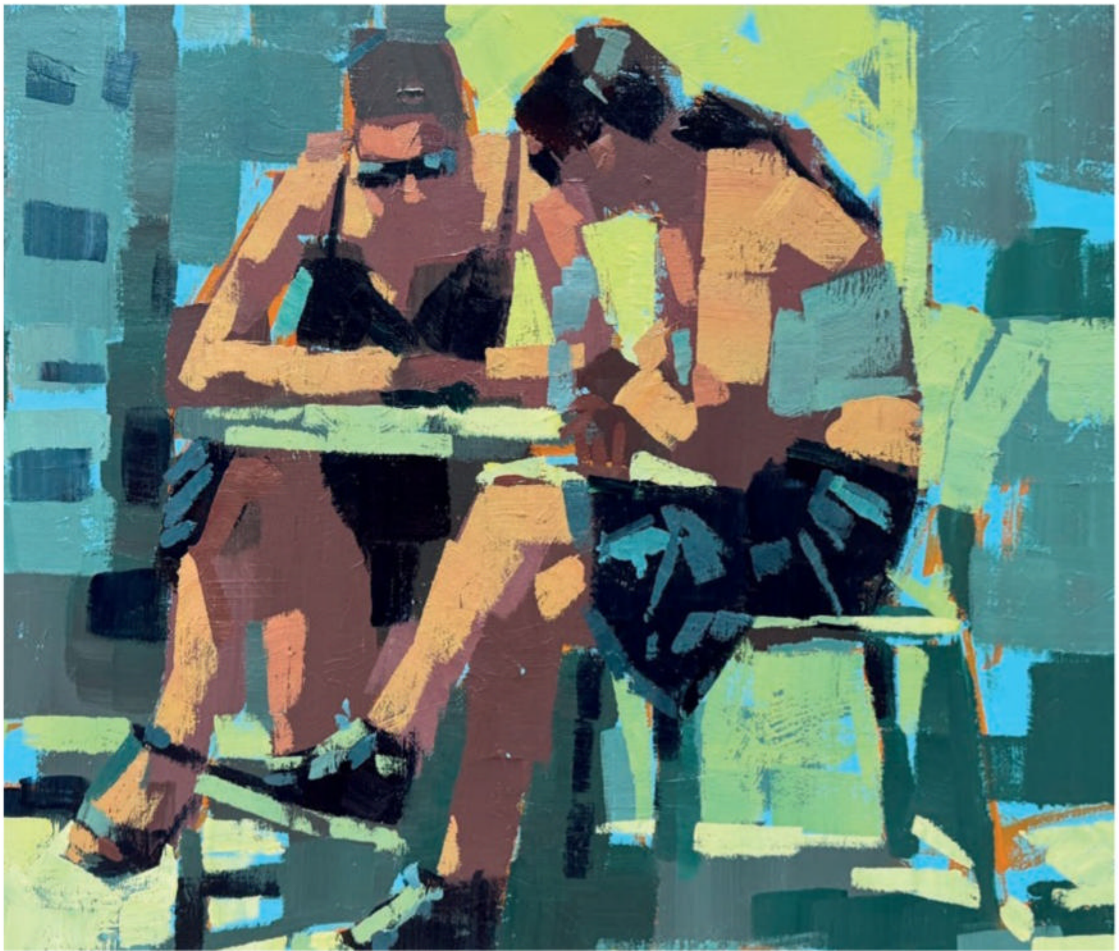
◀ DEFINE THE FIGURES

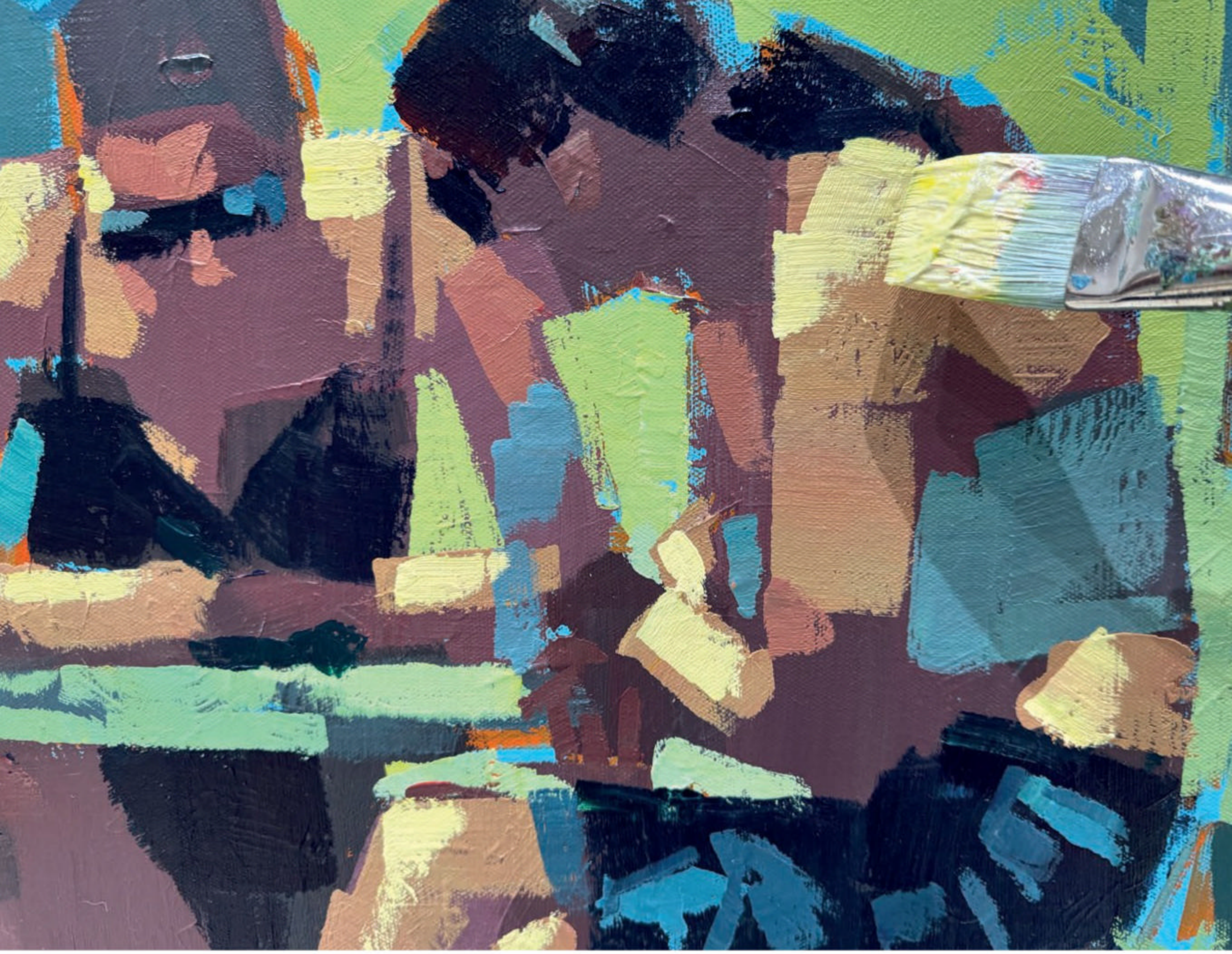
I now want to mix a lighter flesh colour but create a few variations for interest. This will be a combination of my reddish brown, with more Cadmium Red and Cadmium Yellow with Titanium White to control the lightness. I begin utilising my 1 inch flat in conjunction with the other larger brushes. These marks are slightly more controlled bursts to begin defining the figures. Avoid going too light at this stage as it will subdue the lights later on.

7

ADD DETAILS ON THE CLOTHES

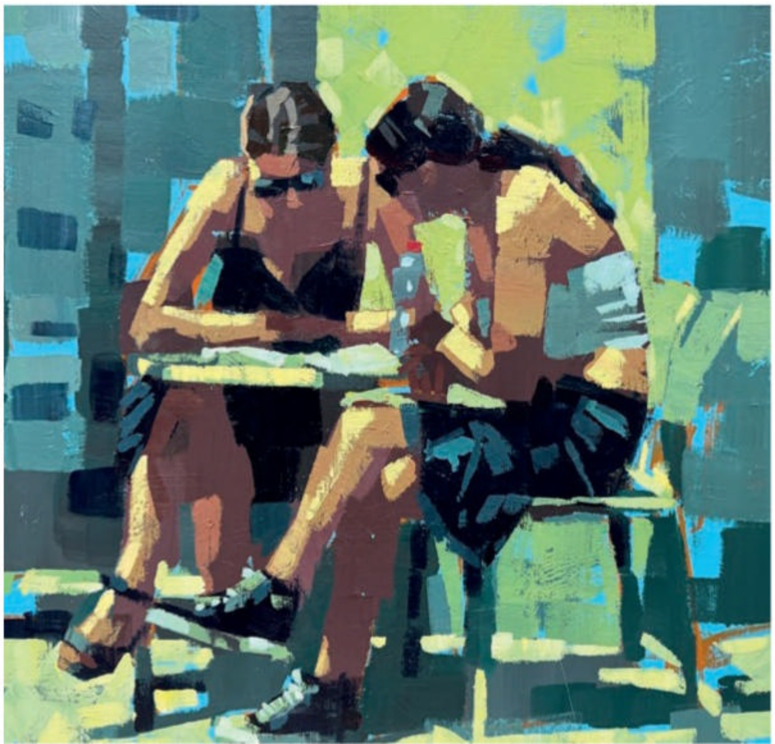
I add more Cadmium Red and reddish brown to create a bridging colour between the light and the initial darker shades. Using a combination of my large 2 and 1 inch brushes, I place this mid-flesh colour in some parts of the figures to provide some contouring effects. I also add details on the clothes, specifically the skirt; this again is a greenish grey mix with a touch more Phthalo Blue.





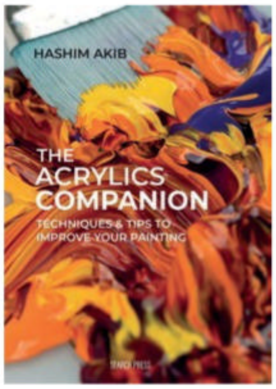
8 LESS IS MORE

I mix a potent combination of light flesh tints from white, yellows and tiny amounts of Cadmium Red and Sap Green. The largest concentration of lights are on the main figure, just block in and move on. The tendency here is to do more but try to resist. Allow the lovely blocks of colour to dominate while large flatter areas provide the breathing room.

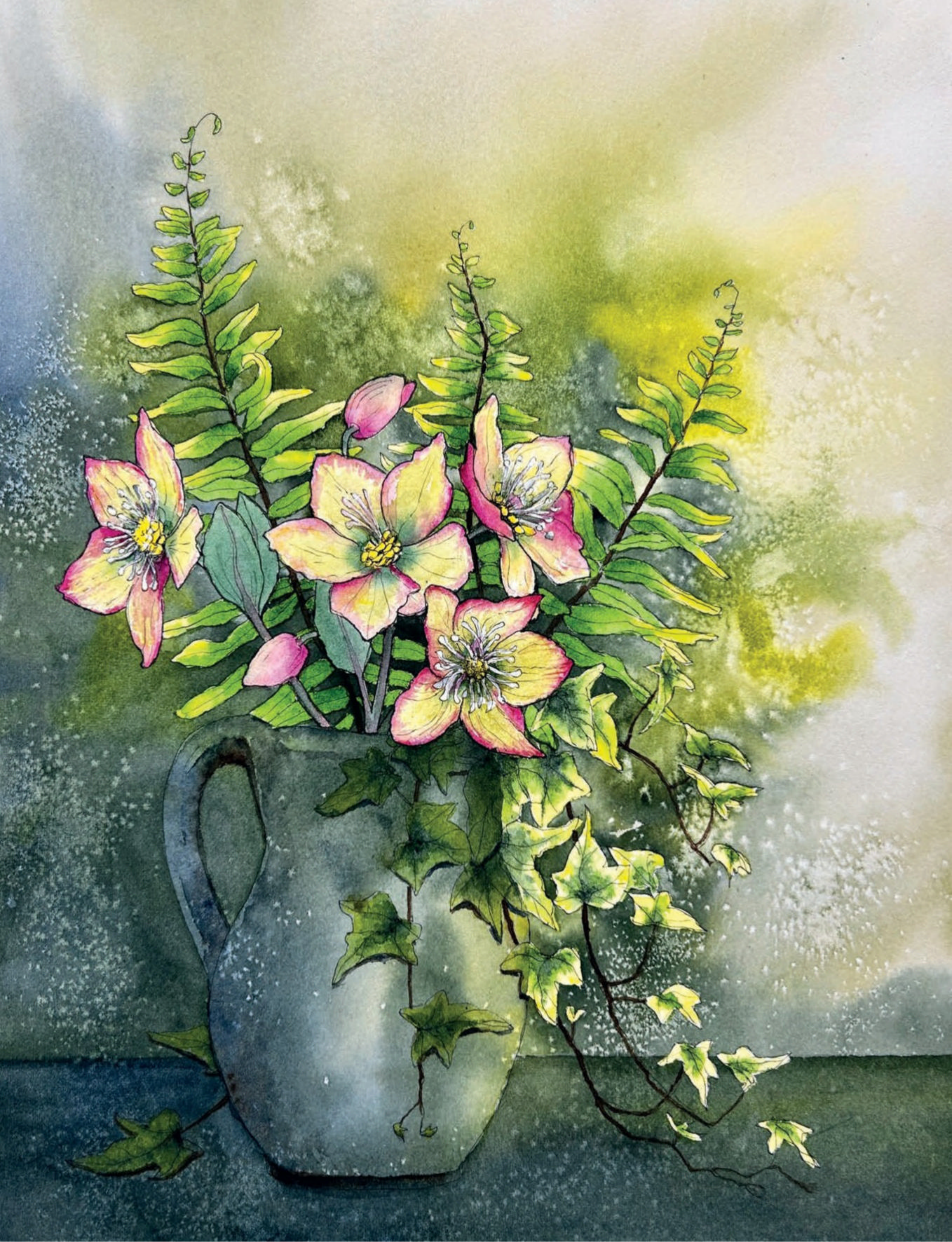


9 AND FINALLY…

The very last aspects include a few richer lights speckled around the figures, lights on the table and chairs. I also add a light blue tint for the main figure's top and work the other's hair. A couple of details on the shoes while the small bottle is highlighted, with a red cap added. I try to keep things understated to maintain a feeling of freshness, not just for the painting but for me.



Hashim's new book, *The Acrylics Companion*, published by Search Press, is available now from all good book retailers □



Winter wonders

LOIS and **MORGAINE DAVIDSON** show you how they painted these enchanting winter hellebores with ferns and ivy in watercolour

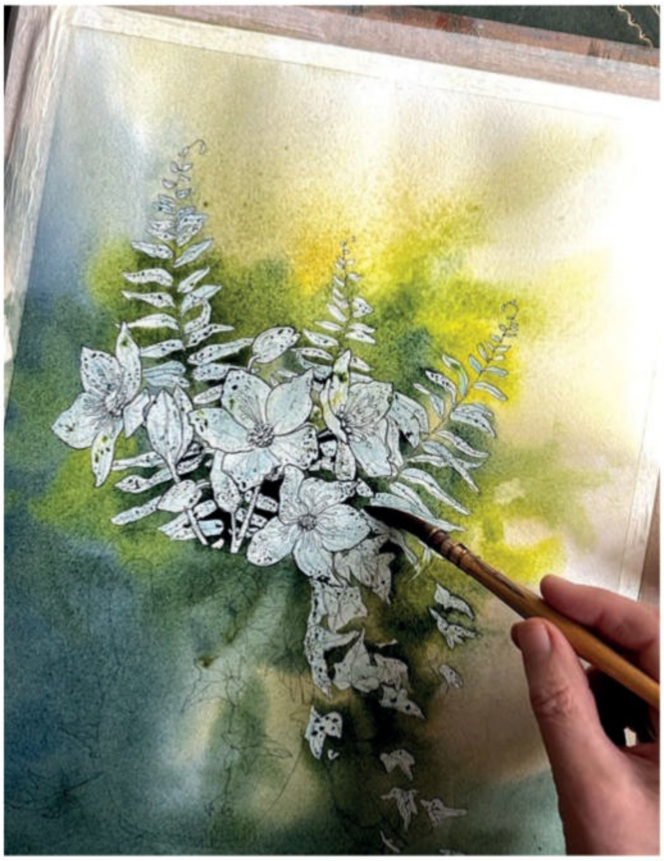
LOIS & MORGAINE 'S MATERIALS

Watercolour paint
Indigo, Perylene Green, Olive Green, Lemon Yellow, Sepia, Quinacridone Magenta, Hooker's Green

Brushes
Size 20 mop brush, Size 2 quill brush, oval wash brush, Size 3 round brush, Size 0 round detail brush

Support
140lb (300gsm) hot-pressed watercolour paper
Sketchbook or sketching paper
Tracing paper
HB pencil and eraser
0.1mm and 0.3mm waterproof black fineliner pens
Painting board and decorator's masking tape
Masking fluid and an old, small pointed brush
Adhesive eraser
Absorbent kitchen paper
Palette with several mixing wells
Water misting spray
Fine table salt

Winter hellebores, also known as Christmas roses, come in many different colours. We love those with cool green petals, veined and limned with pinkish red. The fern fronds and ivy complement them perfectly. Once you are happy with the arrangement, draw the vase and transfer the outline onto hot-pressed watercolour paper. Go over the pencil outline with the 0.1mm and 0.3mm waterproof fineliner pens. Use the 0.1mm fineliner for the ferns, ivy and vase, and use a slightly bolder line with the 0.3mm fineliner to outline the hellebores so that they stand out a little more against the foliage. Mask out the flowers and ferns with masking fluid and an old, small pointed brush. Tape the outline onto your board and lay it flat, ready to begin.



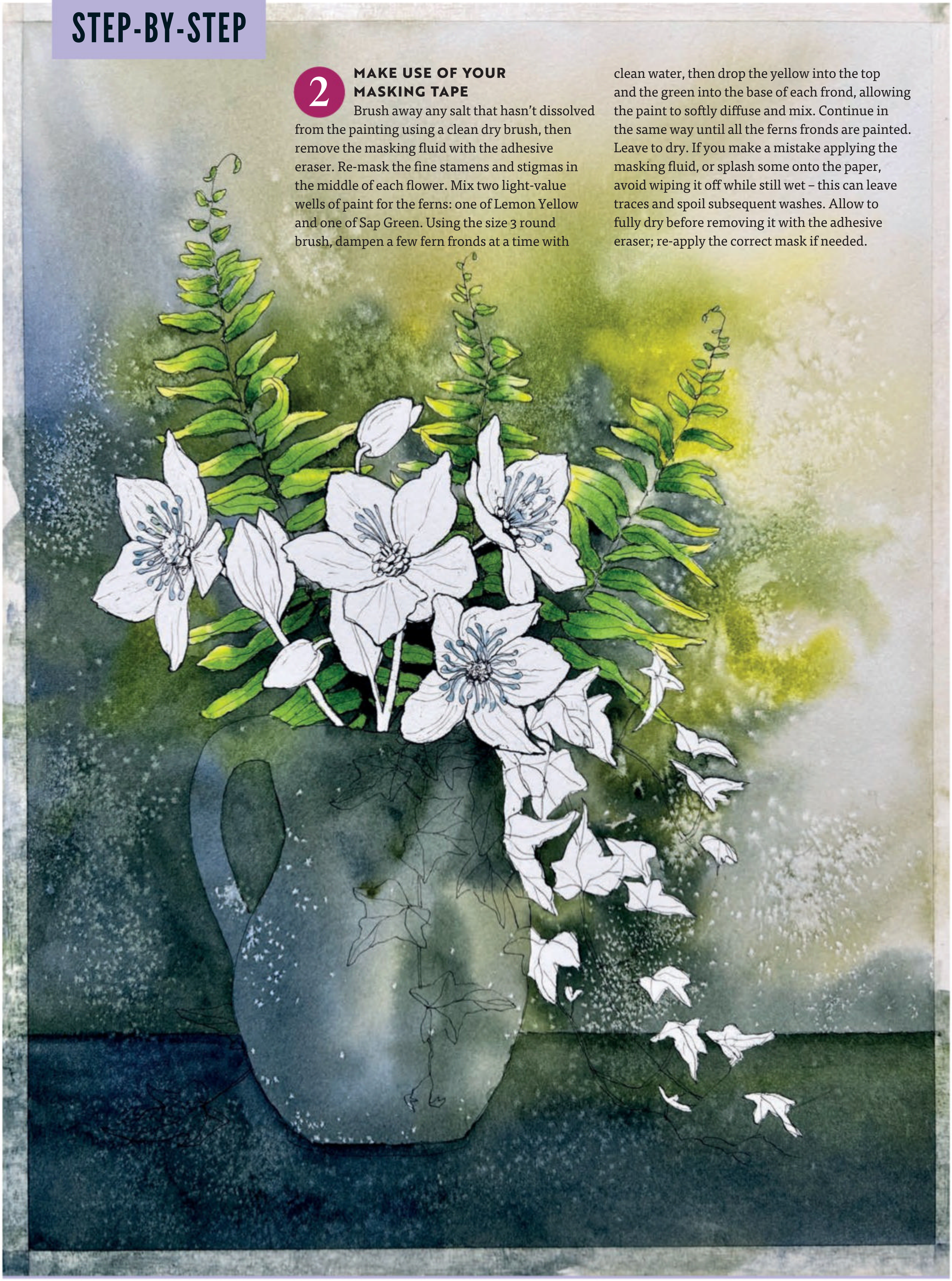
1 USE YOUR WASH SPARINGLY

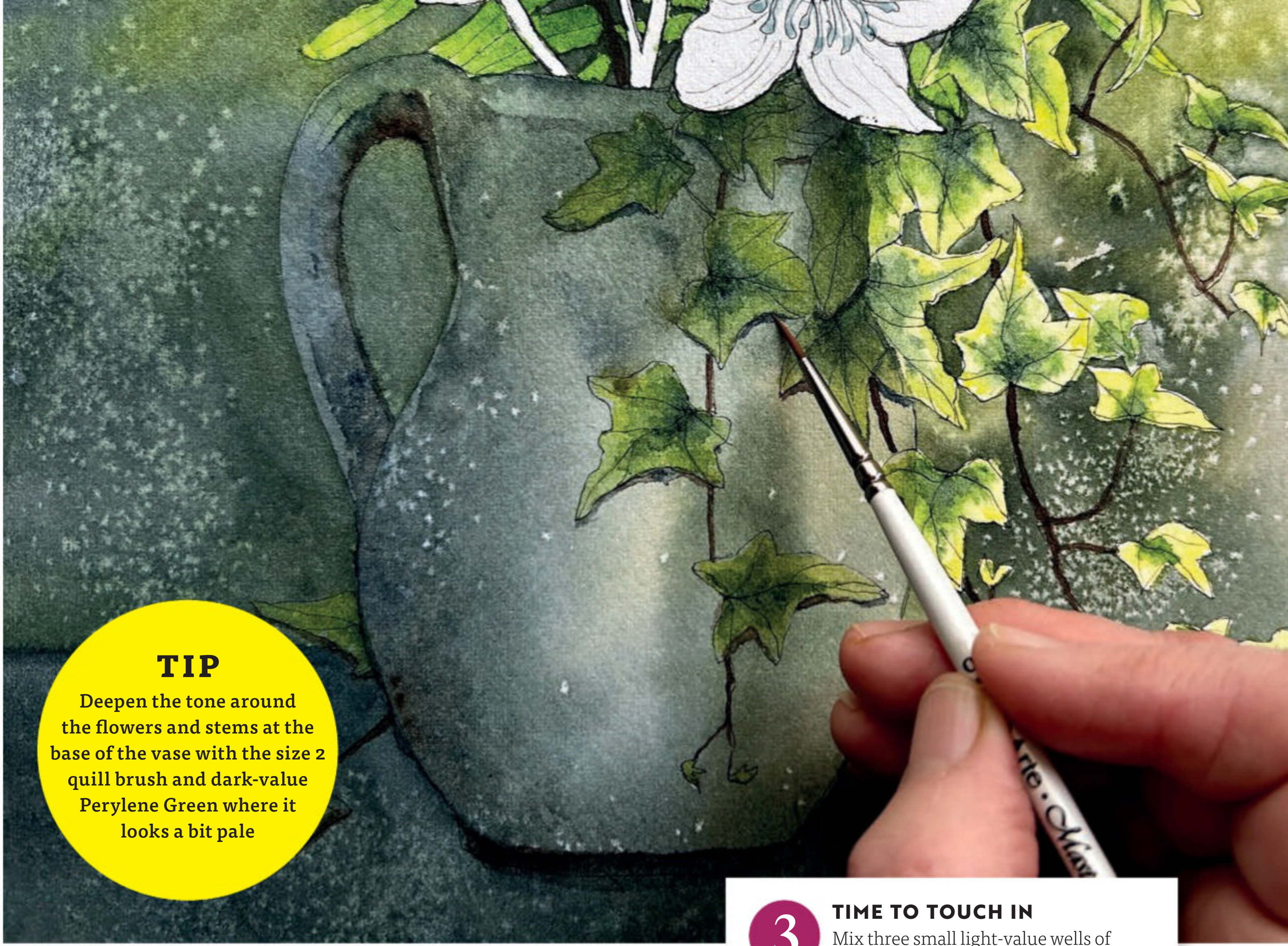
Mix four large wells of mid-value Indigo, Perylene Green, Olive Green and Lemon Yellow, and a small well of dark-value Perylene Green. Wet the page with clean water with the size 20 mop brush. Leave to soak for 30 seconds. Start with sweeping brushstrokes of Indigo across the bottom and left edge. Without rinsing the brush, dip it into the Perylene Green and add around the vase area, allowing the colours to blend on the paper. Rinse the brush and complete the wash with Olive Green and Lemon Yellow, keeping it brighter and yellower top right to indicate the source of light. Once the shine starts to go from the wash, sprinkle with a little fine table salt and leave to dry. Once dry, paint a band of Indigo behind the vase. Allow to dry, then lighten the Indigo mix with a little water and negatively paint around the left of the vase, softening it into the rest of the wash with a clean damp oval wash brush. Leave to dry. ▶

2

MAKE USE OF YOUR MASKING TAPE

Brush away any salt that hasn't dissolved from the painting using a clean dry brush, then remove the masking fluid with the adhesive eraser. Re-mask the fine stamens and stigmas in the middle of each flower. Mix two light-value wells of paint for the ferns: one of Lemon Yellow and one of Sap Green. Using the size 3 round brush, dampen a few fern fronds at a time with clean water, then drop the yellow into the top and the green into the base of each frond, allowing the paint to softly diffuse and mix. Continue in the same way until all the ferns fronds are painted. Leave to dry. If you make a mistake applying the masking fluid, or splash some onto the paper, avoid wiping it off while still wet – this can leave traces and spoil subsequent washes. Allow to fully dry before removing it with the adhesive eraser; re-apply the correct mask if needed.



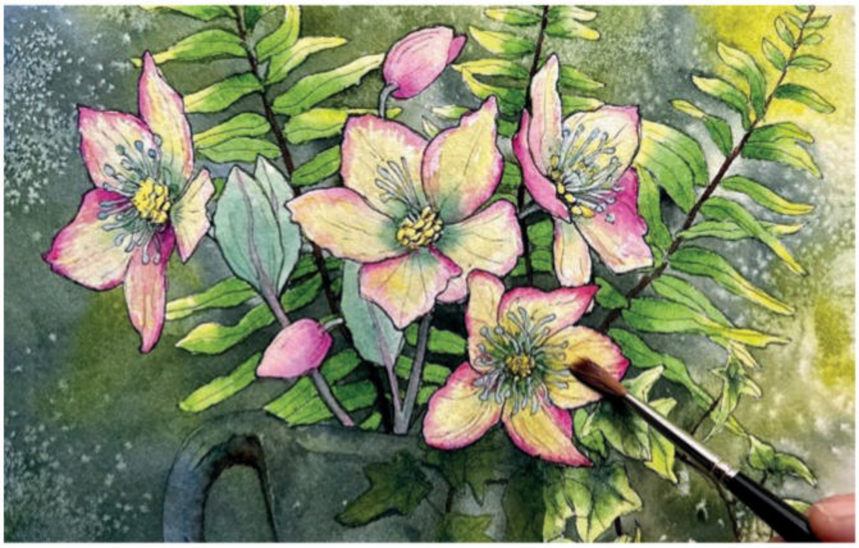


TIP

Deepen the tone around the flowers and stems at the base of the vase with the size 2 quill brush and dark-value Perylene Green where it looks a bit pale

3 TIME TO TOUCH IN

Mix three small light-value wells of Lemon Yellow, Sap Green and Sap Green darkened with a little Indigo. To paint the variegated ivy leaves on the right side of the vase, paint a whole leaf with the yellow using the size 3 round brush, then add a touch of the light-value green at the base of the leaf while still wet. After waiting a few seconds, touch in a small dab of the darker green mix at the base. Repeat for the rest of the leaves in this area. For the ivy leaves in shadow on the vase and left, add a dab more Lemon Yellow to the mix to brighten it, and use this to paint the leaves. Touch a little of the dark green into the centres. Leave to dry. Next, mix two wells of mid-value colour: Sepia and Indigo. Paint the fern and ivy stems with Sepia using the size 0 detail brush. Brush a little clean water across the base, handle, rim and left edge of the vase with the oval wash brush. Dab Sepia and Indigo into these areas while damp to add shadows. Leave to dry.



4 GLAZE OVER

Mix three wells of mid-value Olive Green with a touch of Lemon Yellow, Quinacridone Magenta and Hooker's Green. To paint a flower, dampen each petal with clean water using the size 3 round brush, and paint the middle part of the petal with the Olive Green/Lemon Yellow mix. Add delicate edges to each petal with the magenta. While still wet, add a dab of Hooker's Green around the masked-out stamens. Repeat for all flowers. When completely dry, glaze over the whole flower with watery, light-value Lemon Yellow to add an ethereal glow. Paint the hellebore leaves and stems with Hooker's Green, adding a little Magenta in the leaf vein and stems to redden them. Paint the buds with Magenta, graduating the tone from light to dark to suggest their shape and form. Once dry, glaze the buds with the watery Lemon Yellow. Remove the masking fluid from the stamens with the adhesive eraser and add a little light-value Indigo to them here and there to indicate subtle shadows.

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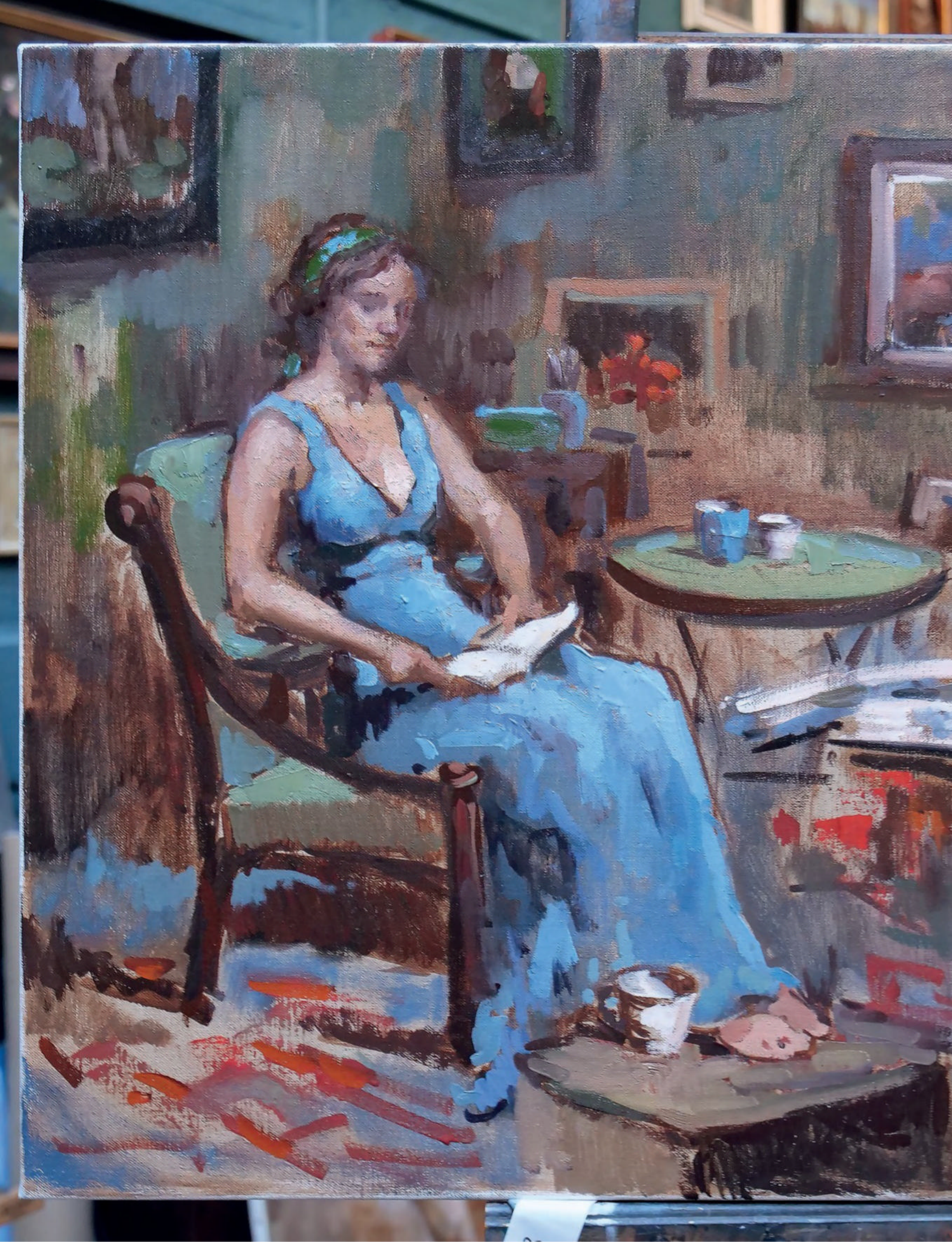
FLOWERS IN
WATERCOLOUR



Painting the clothed figure

London Fine Art Studios founder **ANN WITHERIDGE** explains the art of drawing a clothed figure in oil

EVERY PAINTING'S VARYING SUBJECT MATTER and scale offers us distinct opportunities and challenges. Before I start any project, I like to consider what I want to convey, what opportunities and challenges the subject presents, and what clear steps I would like to take.

The clothed figure is one of the more complex subjects to paint, as it incorporates a range of elements, including portraiture, figure painting, interiors and still life. Doing compositional tonal sketches and colour studies really helps the process.

When painting a simple still life or doing an *en plein air* landscape sketch, a value or colour study is not always necessary due to the immediate and clear subject matter. However, they are certainly great to do. As an experienced artist, I am likely to perform these exercises in my mind, both consciously and subconsciously. If you are less experienced, it is helpful to do practice sketches to understand why we make certain choices more clearly.

londonfineartstudios.com

SETTING THE POSE

I asked my friend to pose while reading; I knew that she would be happier to sit for longer doing this, and it gave the painting a more relaxed feel. As it is set in my studio, the scattered still life props and canvases give it a natural atmosphere. You don't want your painting to look too staged, so doing a painting at home, in a garden or in your own environment really helps. Her feet were a little uncomfortable, so we found a box to prop them up; she also had some extra books and a cup of tea by her side. All these small elements add to the design of the painting and better place the figure in the space. Choosing the subject is key to the success of a painting. If it looks good in nature, you are halfway there.

COMPOSITION

The 'painting canons' (or rules) can be broken down to drawing, values, colour and edges. We must try to see the composition in terms of these steps to make the set-up seem less complicated. Drawing is the placement, scale and design of the subject within the whole painting.We must consider both the placement of the subject on the canvas and the scale of the figure in the composition. ▶

PLACEMENT

It is important to think about how much lead in you want, whether that is more space in front, below or above. In my first drawing I felt the figure was too close to the left edge, so I moved her across a little.

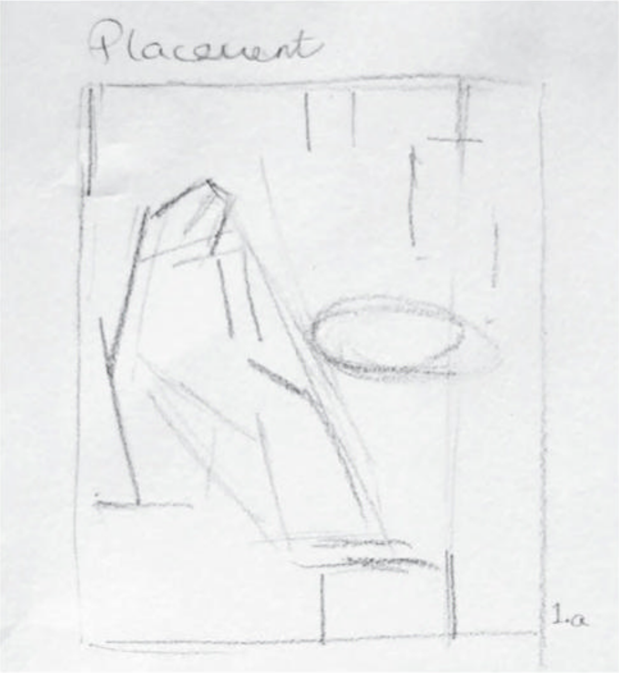
SCALE

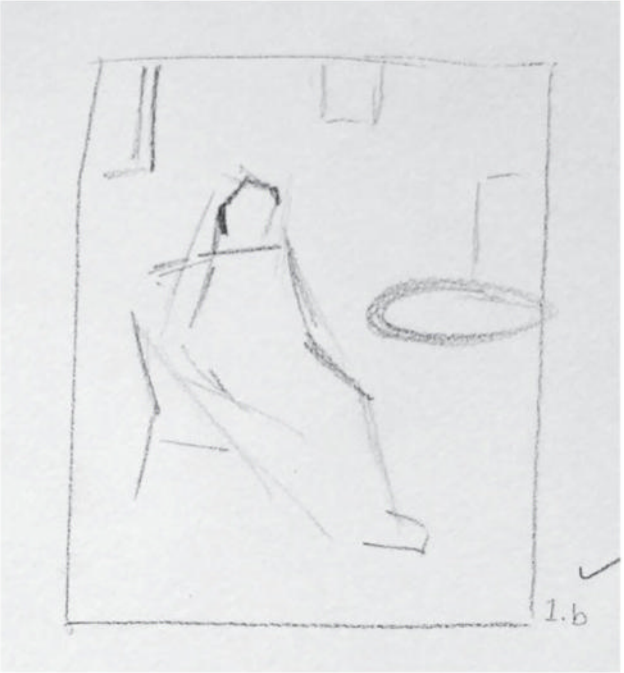
Here, although I liked the scale I first chose, I tried to make her smaller in the space (making it more about the interior) and much larger (making it more about the figure) to compare the differing compositions. I still preferred my initial choice.

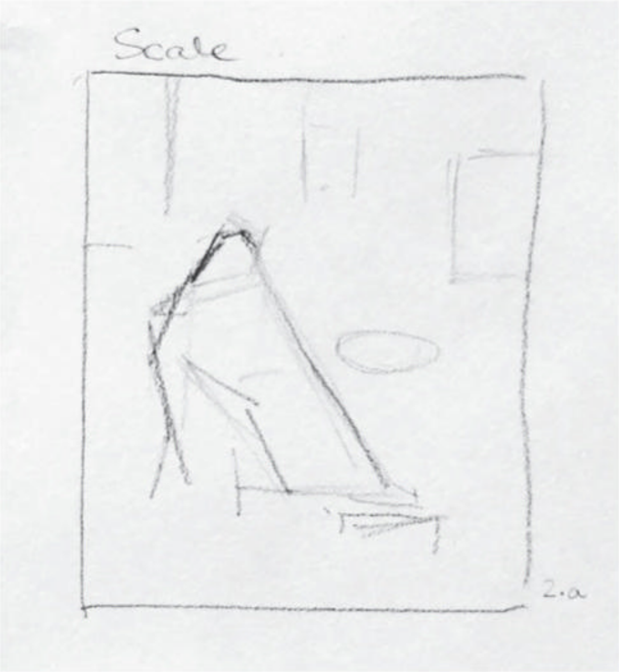
VALUE STUDIES IN PENCIL

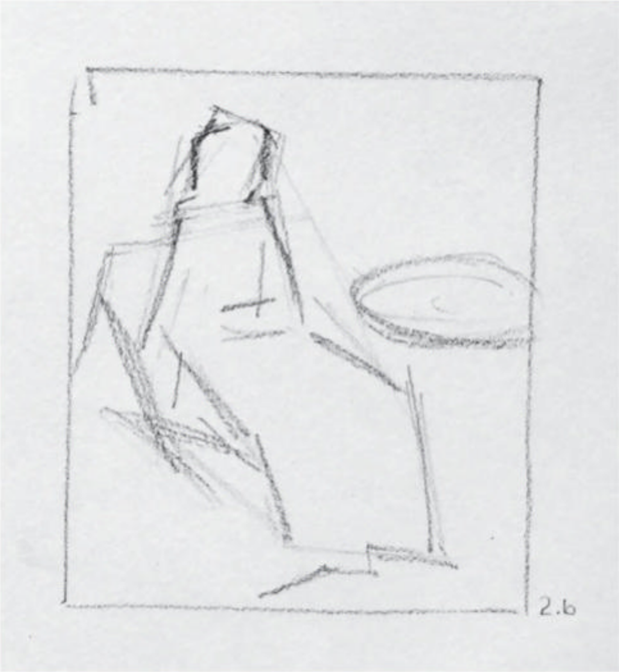
It is also essential to see whether the values (lights and darks) balance. We don't want completely flat light, where the figure is all in light and swallowed by a dark void behind; nor do we want the values in the background to be too busy, as they would distract us from the figure. In figure A, we can see that the background value is too similar to the value of the figure, so, despite the apparent range of lights and darks, the figure looks flat. However, by pushing the background darker, the lights on figure B jump out more, and the focal point is made clearer.

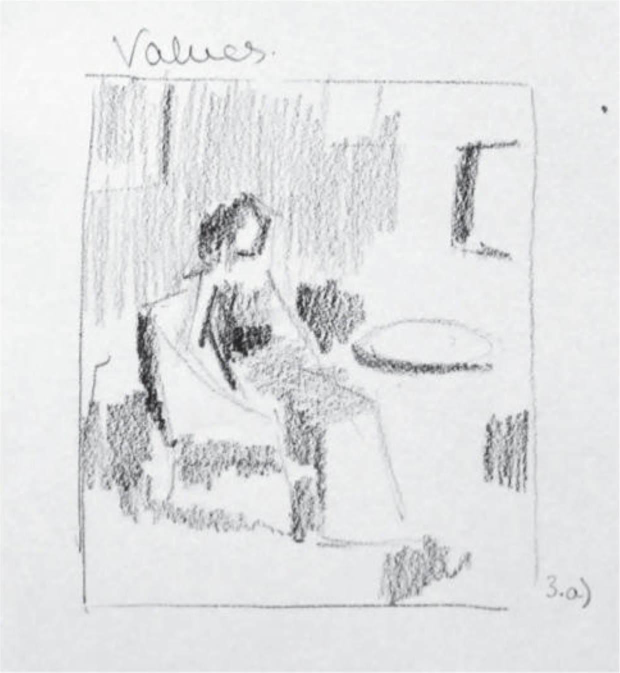
These drawing sketches take very little time but really help consolidate our decisions. In my sketches, I found that the table and the cup, as well as the wall behind, also help to create space around the figure. Now, onto the oil painting.

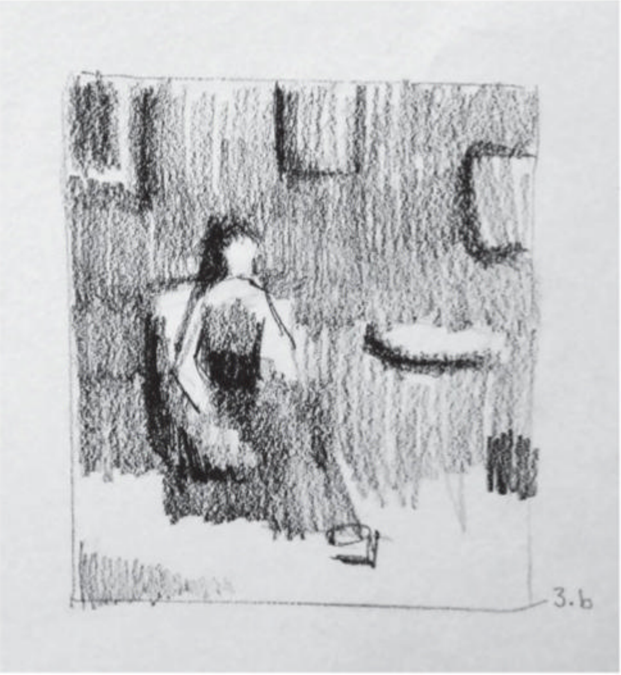


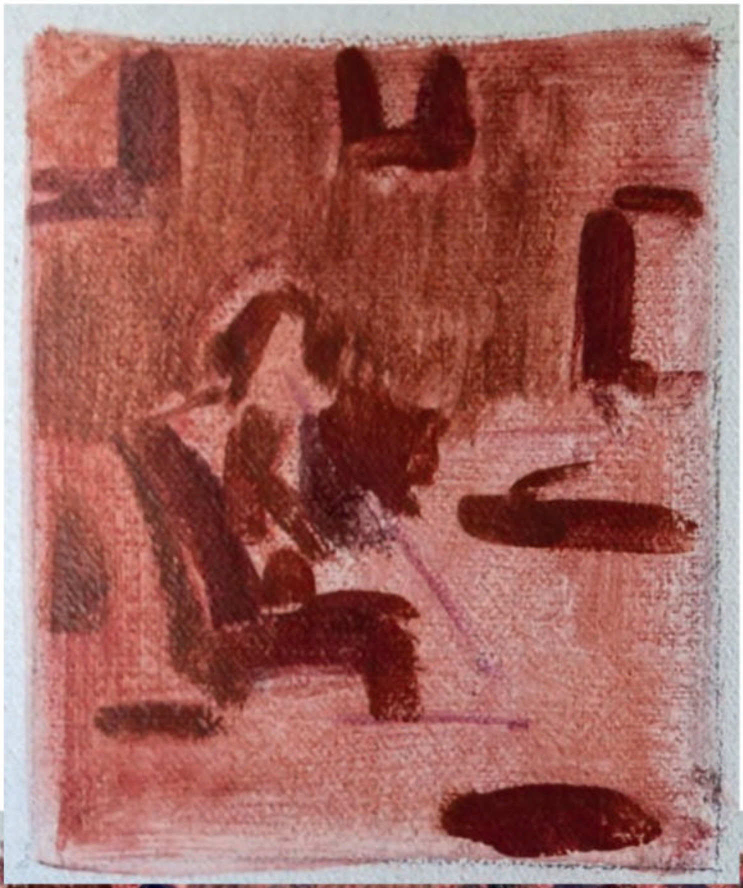






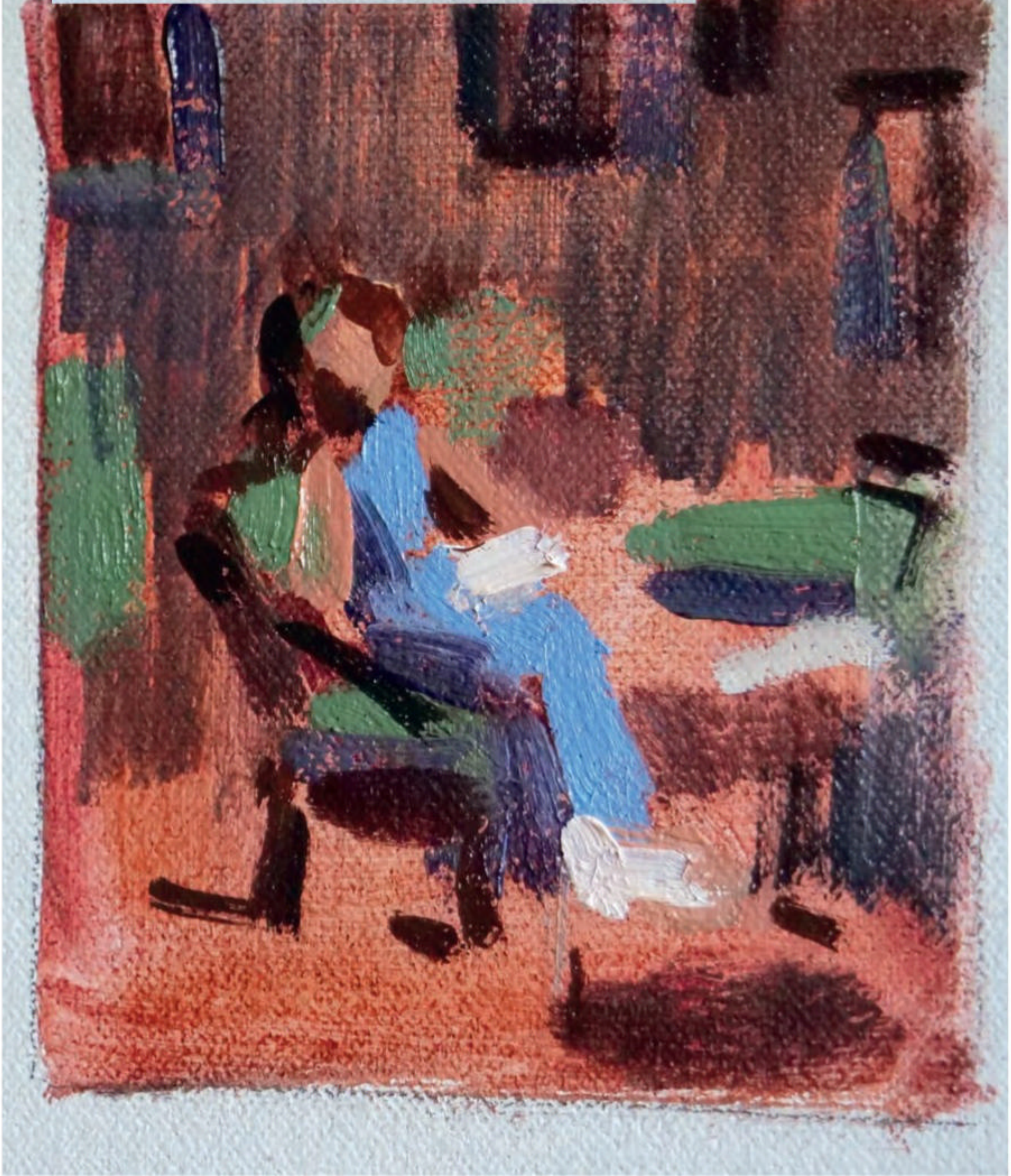






VALUE STUDY IN OIL

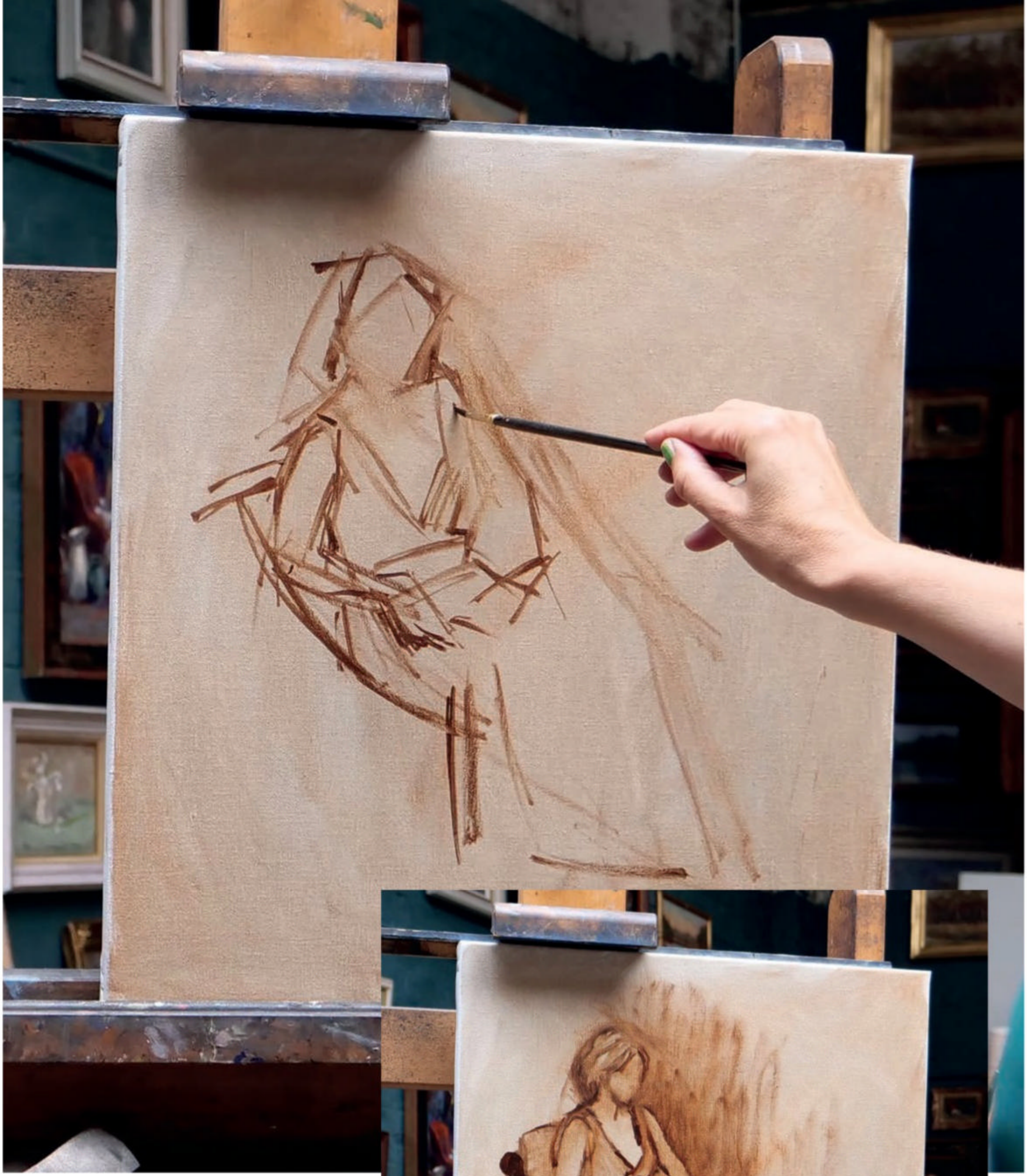
I like to start with a value study in oil, to make sure my drawing decisions translate; colour can be really distracting. We must question whether the painting works in terms of values and ask ourselves if there is a good balance. Here, I have just used Burnt Sienna with a little Ultramarine Blue.

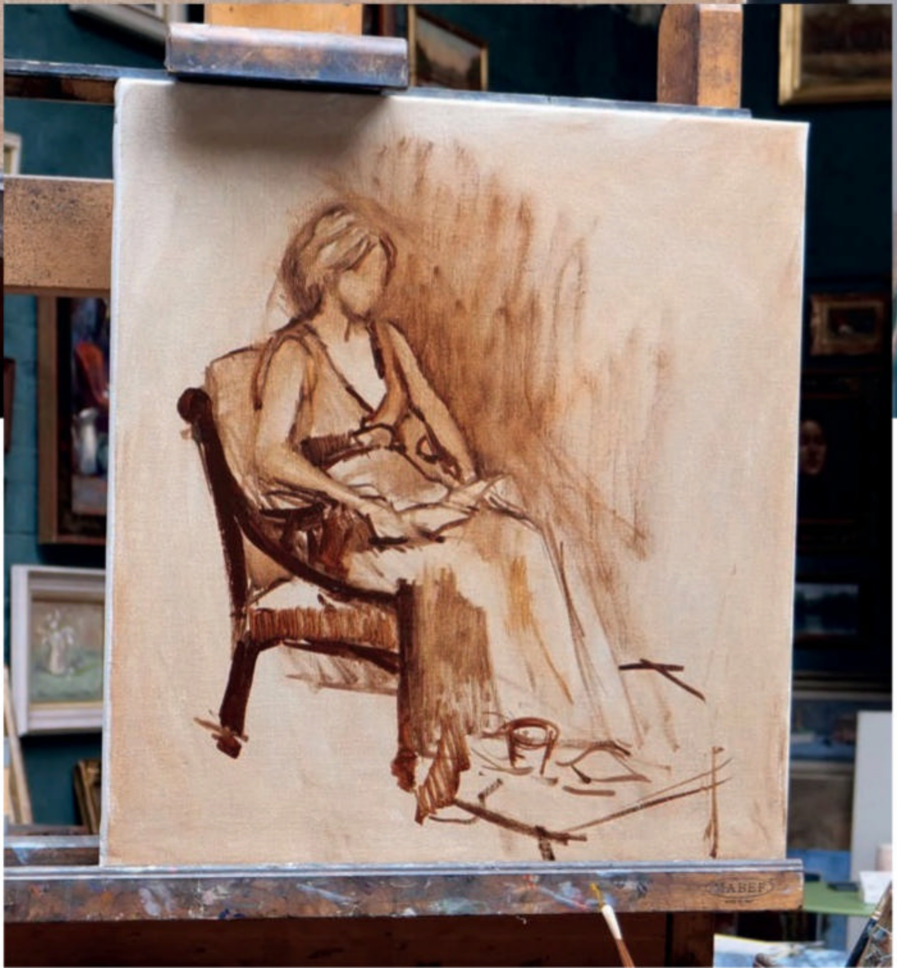


COLOUR NOTE STUDIES

I really enjoy this part of the painting process because after the drawing, value and colour notes are complete, I feel I have everything organised in my head and clearly laid out. The artist's role is about being selective and making choices about how to design a painting, deciding what to omit or reduce, in a form of abstraction; it is not to render everything we see in completion. For me, the colour note study frees us from the confines of drawing. This step really helps me to remember the key elements of the overall painting, so I like to keep the colour notes simple.

To help me do this, I pre-mixed piles of colours: Burnt Sienna and Ultramarine Blue for the darks; Titanium White with a tint of Yellow Ochre for the lights; Titanium White, Yellow Ochre and Burnt Sienna for the flesh; Cadmium Yellow, Titanium White and Ultramarine Blue for the greens; Ultramarine Blue and Titanium White for the dress. ▶

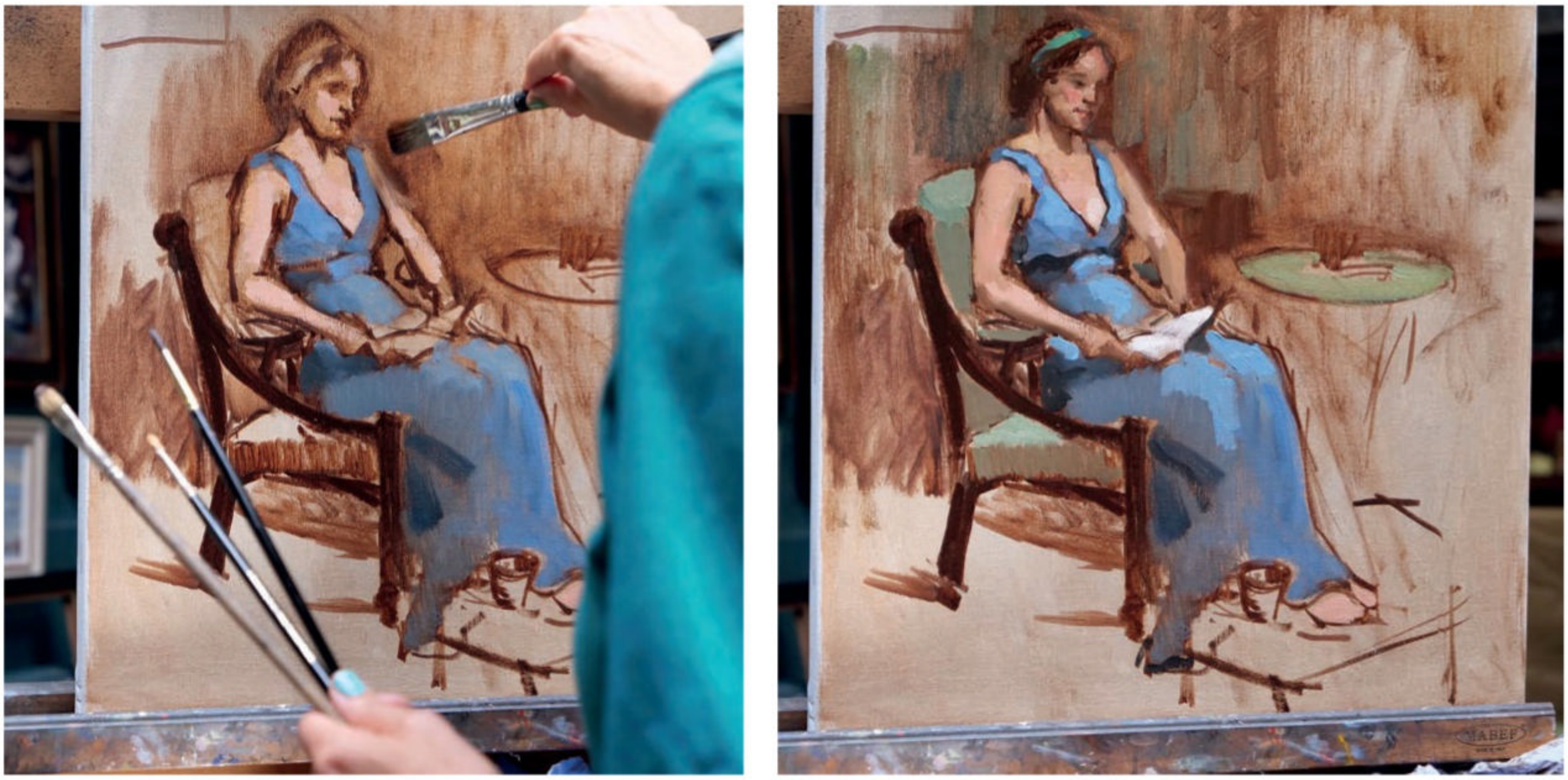




CREATE A SKETCH

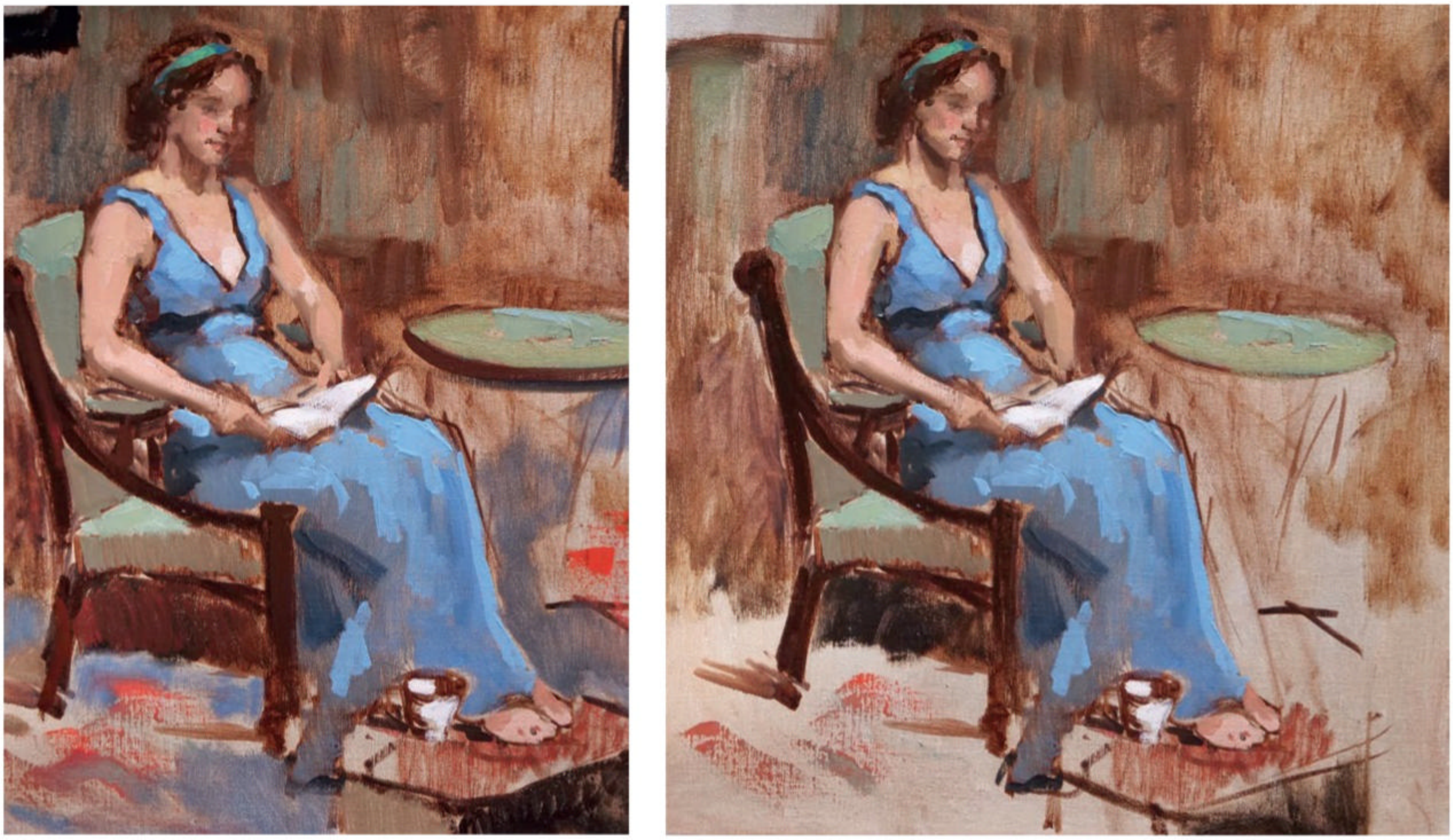
Having finished the preliminary sketches, I was even more excited to get started with the big painting. My progress was more fluid because of the design exercises. It is always essential to choose a focal point and to make sure the extra, smaller elements in the background help rather than distract from the focal point. I love this stage, when the painting is *alla prima*, and I have blocked in all the elements.

I began on the canvas by sketching out my composition using Burnt Umber, then using the same colour to block in the shadow shapes.



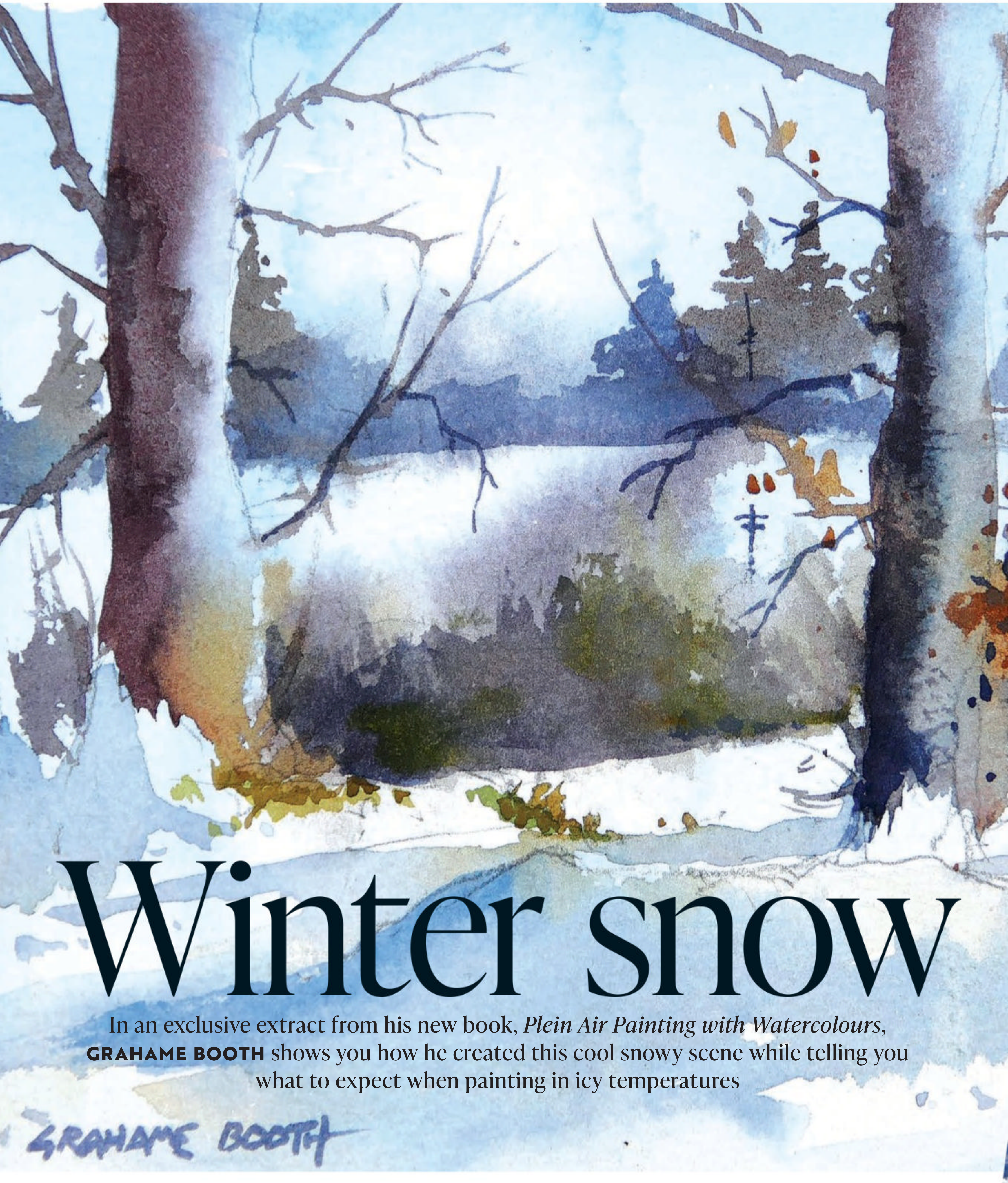
BLOCK IN

Keeping things loose, I blocked in the general colour shapes, refining detail and colour variation as I went along.



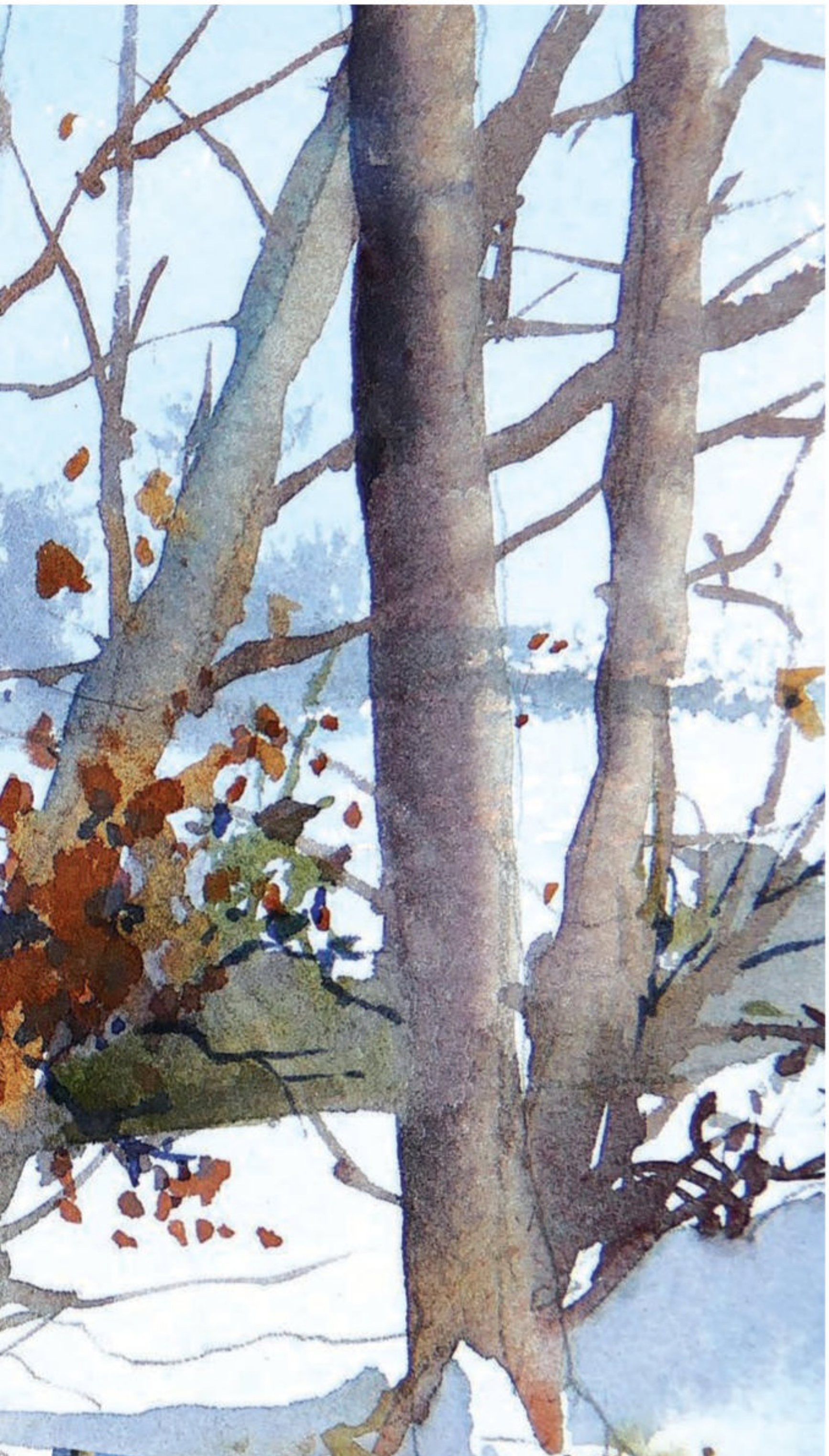
COLOUR HARMONY

From doing the simple colour note studies, I understood how harmonious the colours really are: the blue of the dress is in the frames and background, and the green of the chair is in the table and walls. They are all clean, separate colours, yet they balance and move around the canvas beautifully. Moreover, I found that my base colour of Burnt Umber complements the blues and greens and acts as a unifying note under the other layers of paint. I dragged hints of the carpet colours under the model rather than completing the patterns. The stack of white papers, the frames against the walls and the hung paintings all help to create a rhythm of both shapes and colour around the painting. I think the hardest part is to try to keep the portrait in balance with the rest of the painting, as, when the very small shapes matter, we feel we are less able to keep it abstracted. I find that making compositional sketches and working from life really helps me to keep the painting loose and fresh, with a more impressionistic feel. □



Winter snow

In an exclusive extract from his new book, *Plein Air Painting with Watercolours*, **GRAHAME BOOTH** shows you how he created this cool snowy scene while telling you what to expect when painting in icy temperatures

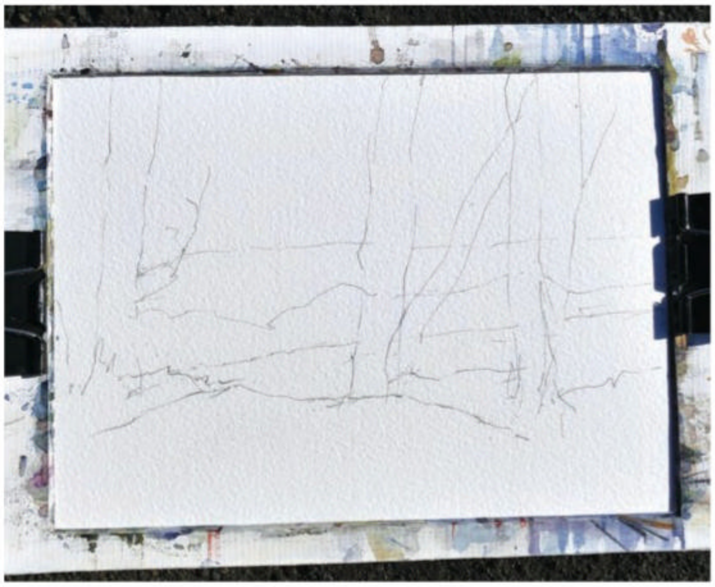


I STRUGGLED INTO MY LAYERS, picked up my light sketching kit and off I went up into the hills behind where I live. I wasn't the first to arrive; halfway up the hill I could already hear the cries of excited children (and adults) with their toboggans. I am very familiar with this area and already had an idea of what I would paint. The sun was in the right position and so I didn't have to waste too much time selecting a subject. Nothing too onerous, just a view through the trees and across the field of snow. There was a nice splash of warmth in the beech leaves still attached to one of the trees.

GRAHAM'S MATERIALS

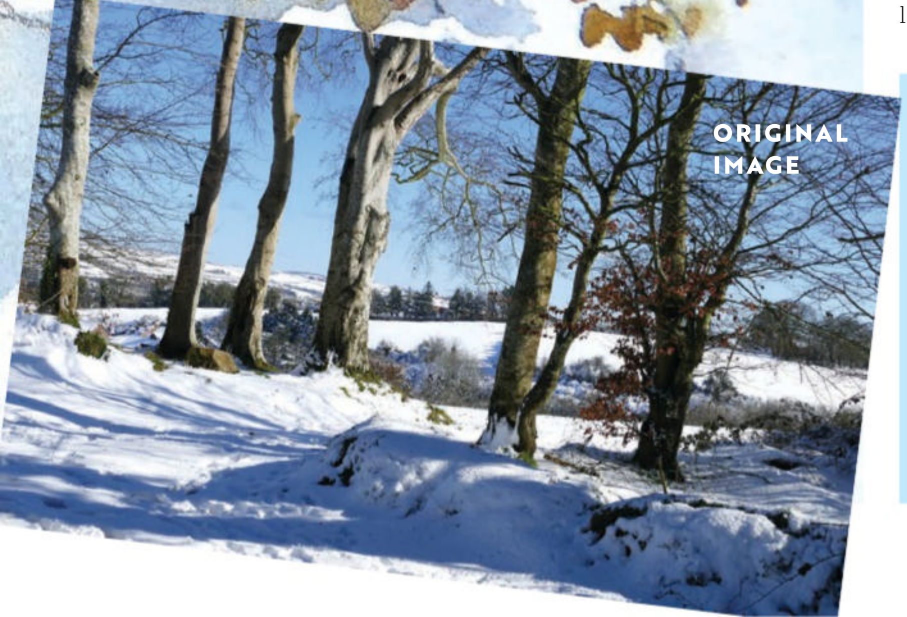
Watercolour paints
Cobalt Blue, Phthalo Blue (Green Shade), Ultramarine, Quinacridone Magenta, Burnt Sienna, Warm Red, Warm Yellow

Brushes
Size 12 round synthetic travel brush
Small Chinese brush (approx. size 6); a size 6 rigger would be similar



1 THE INITIAL SKETCH

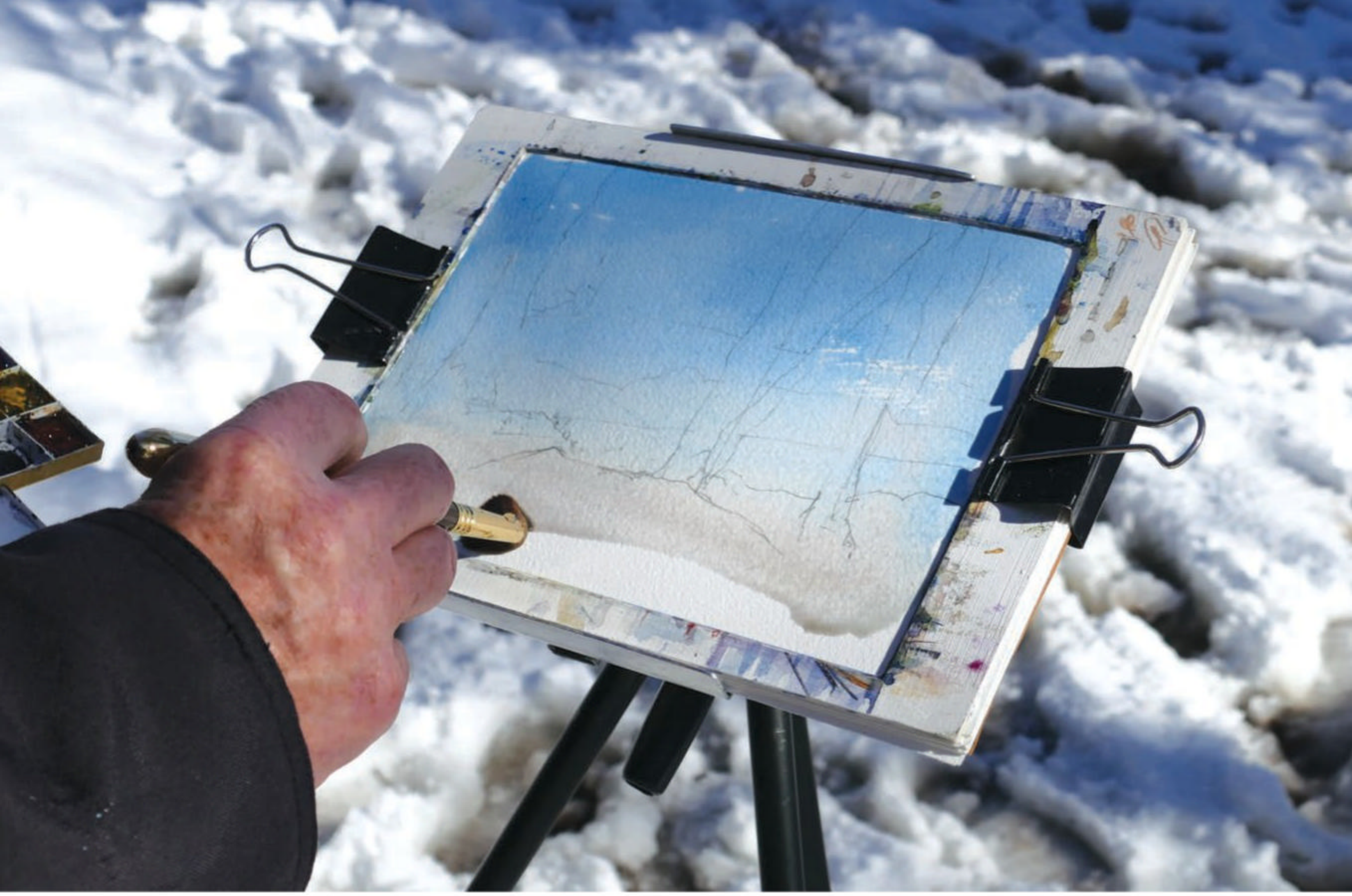
I have kept the sketch relatively loose and simple, only marking in tree trunks and the top edges of fields or snowbanks. If you refer to the reference photograph, you can see which parts of the original scene I chose to omit, change or accentuate in the final sketch. I reduced the number of trees by focusing in on the largest three, to give a better balance to the composition.



ORIGINAL IMAGE

PAINTING SNOW

In a snow painting there are two important things to consider. First, the snow must be lighter than almost everything else, but second, the snow mustn't be pure white. This might seem a little strange; after all, snow is very obviously white. However, when we view it, it is affected by all sorts of things, chiefly the warm light from the winter sun, which actually makes it slightly warm in colour. On the other hand, shadows on snow are clearly blue and cool. This is why it is best not to leave the snow as white paper – the white paper is much too stark. ▸

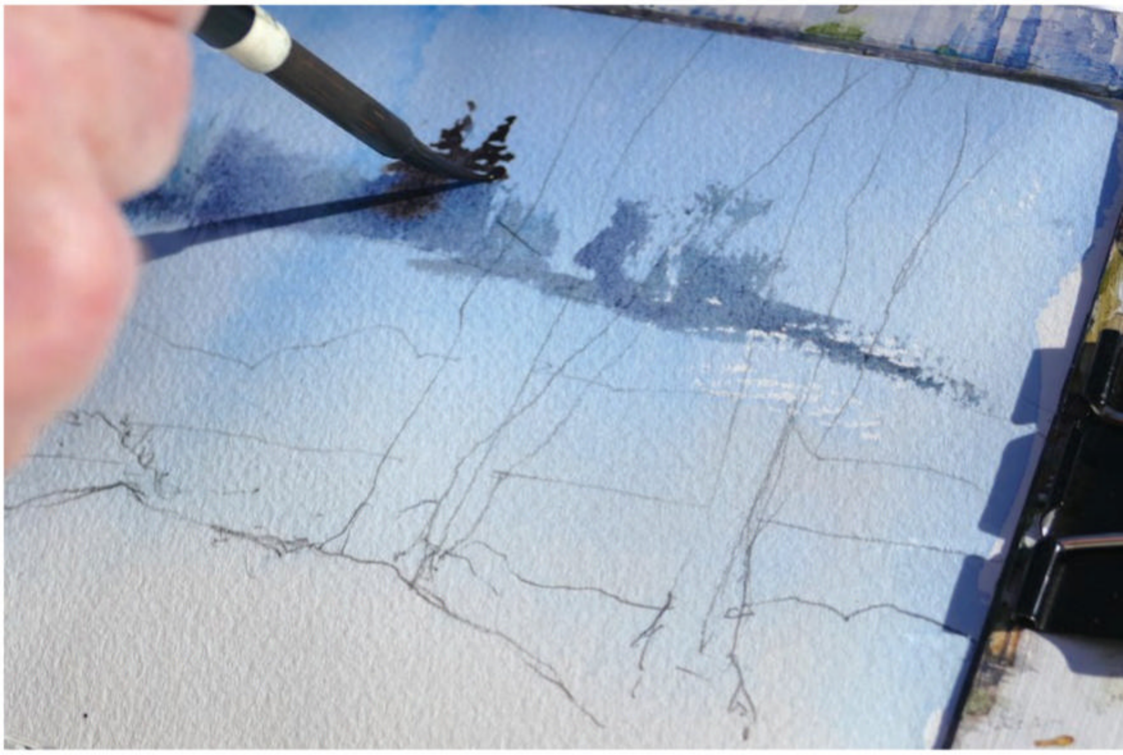


2 THE FIRST WASH ▲

Starting at the top of the paper and using a size 12 round brush, use a mix of Phthalo Blue (Green Shade) with a touch of Quinacridone Magenta for the sky. This mix produces a very lively, transparent sky blue, ideal for snow and for subjects requiring a really rich sky colour. Lighten the blue as you go down the paper past the furthest fields, but then gradually add a little Burnt Sienna to the mix.

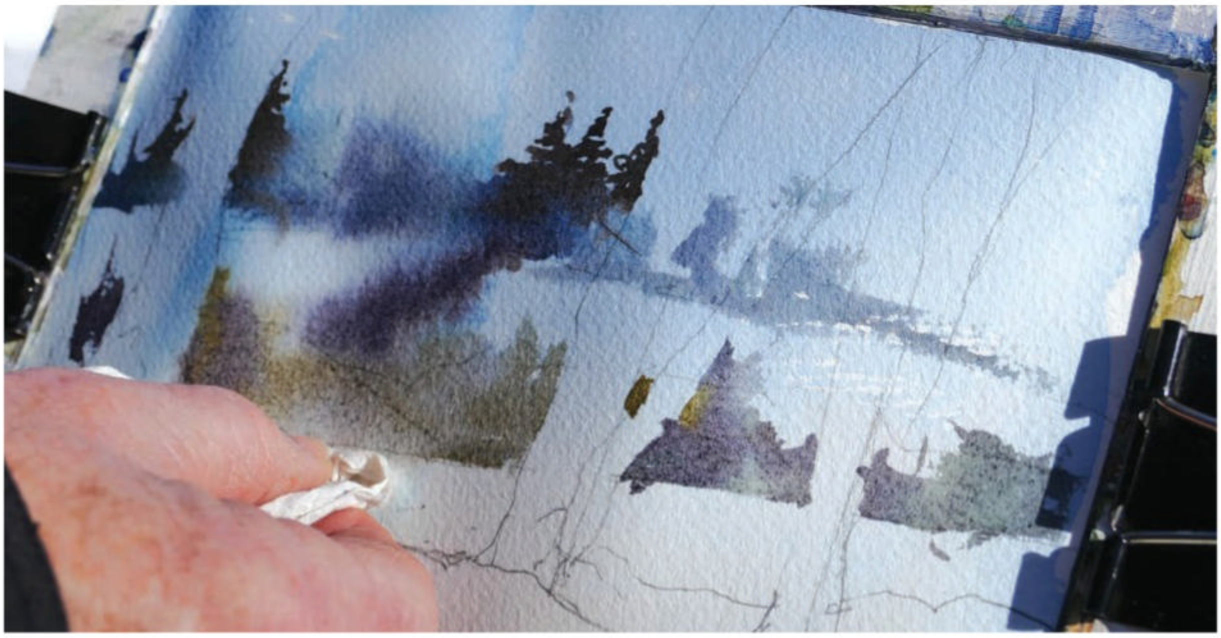
LOCATION INSIGHT: THE PERILS OF SNOWFALL!

A lump of snow fell off the tree above and landed squarely down my neck. Suitably woken up, I hopped around for a few seconds, as you do, then got back to work. You would have thought I would have learnt from that, but no; a few seconds later a blob of melted snow landed on my paper. My lesson learnt? Never stand directly under a tree when there is melting snow on it.



3 THE DISTANT TREELINE

Sticking with the Phthalo Blue, add some Warm Red to form a rich dark blue-grey, ideal for the distant treeline. Make the mix quite strong. Use the side of a rigger to give a varied line. Once the first wash has just about dried, but before the treeline dries, add a few simple conifer shapes with a slightly darker mix to blend nicely into the rest of the trees. Create more defined, tree-like shapes using the tip of your rigger and working down from the tip of the tree in loose, side-to-side diagonal movements.

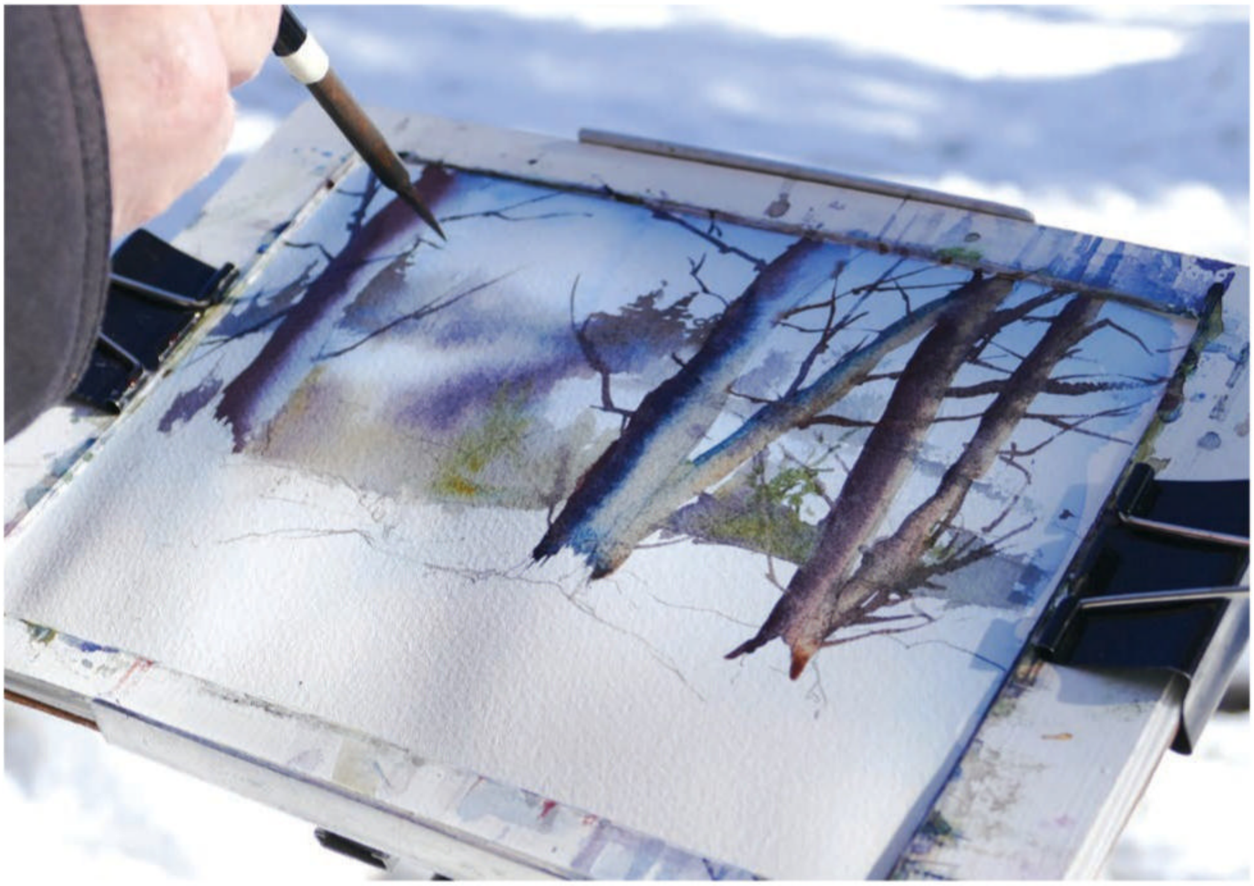


4 THE SHRUBS

Add a little Warm Yellow into the step three mix, and then repeat the same loose, varied brushstrokes to create the nearer line of shrubs. Leave the painting to dry for as long as you can bear before moving on to the next step.

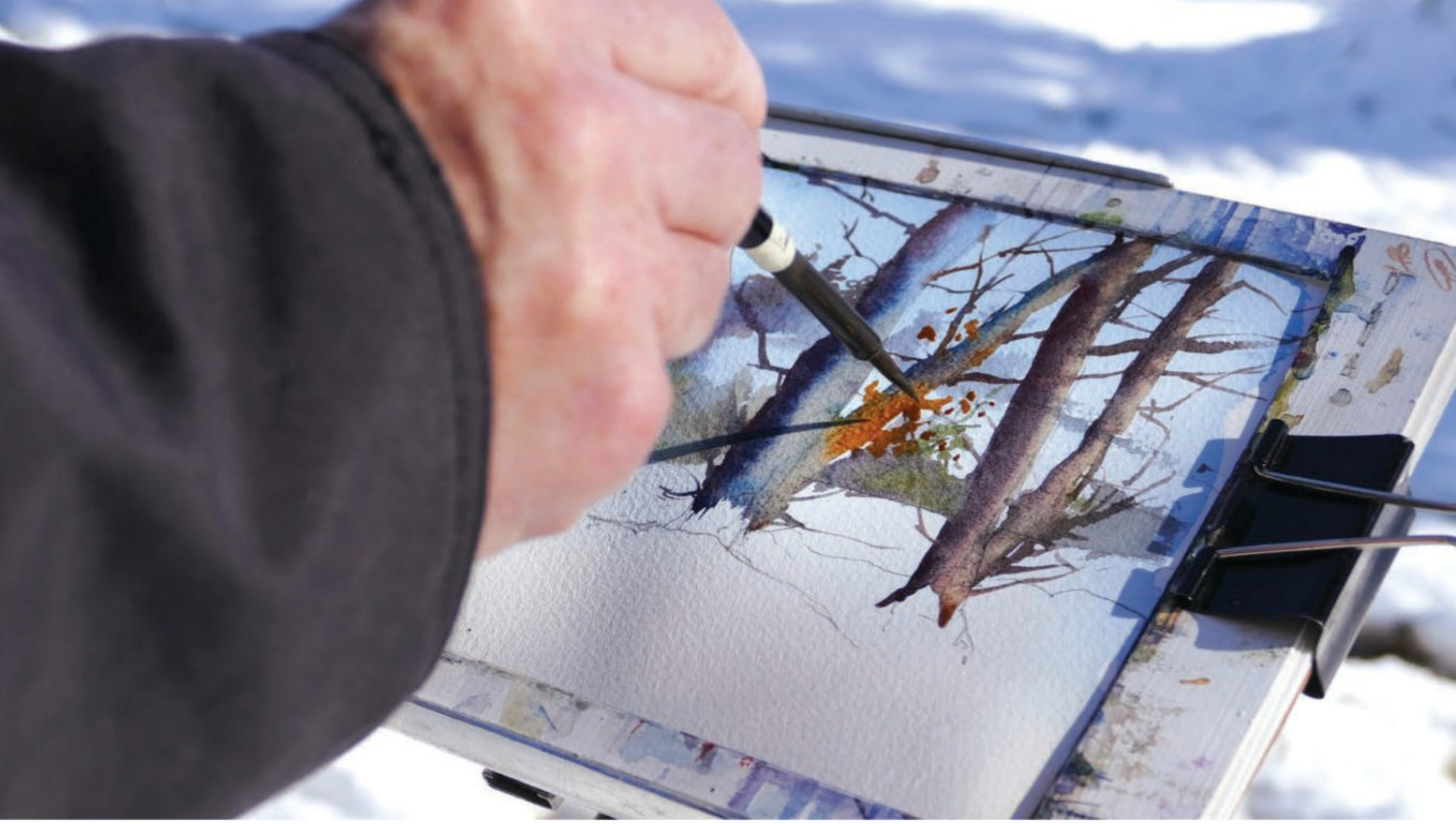
5 THE TREES

These need a sense of their cylindrical shape, and this can be suggested with a stripe of dark paint on the shadow side: Phthalo Blue (green shade) plus Warm Red, immediately followed with a damp brush down the light side. All being well, the dark will gently drift across into the light giving a soft dark-to-light transition. Sometimes it can drift too much, in which case you'll need to use a drier brush to lift off some of that excess colour on the light side. Equally, it may not drift enough, in which case you'll need to tease it across using a barely damp brush. Repeat for the other trees, changing the mix slightly purely for variety. Because of the low temperatures the painting was drying so slowly that I worked on all of the trunks before starting on the side branches.



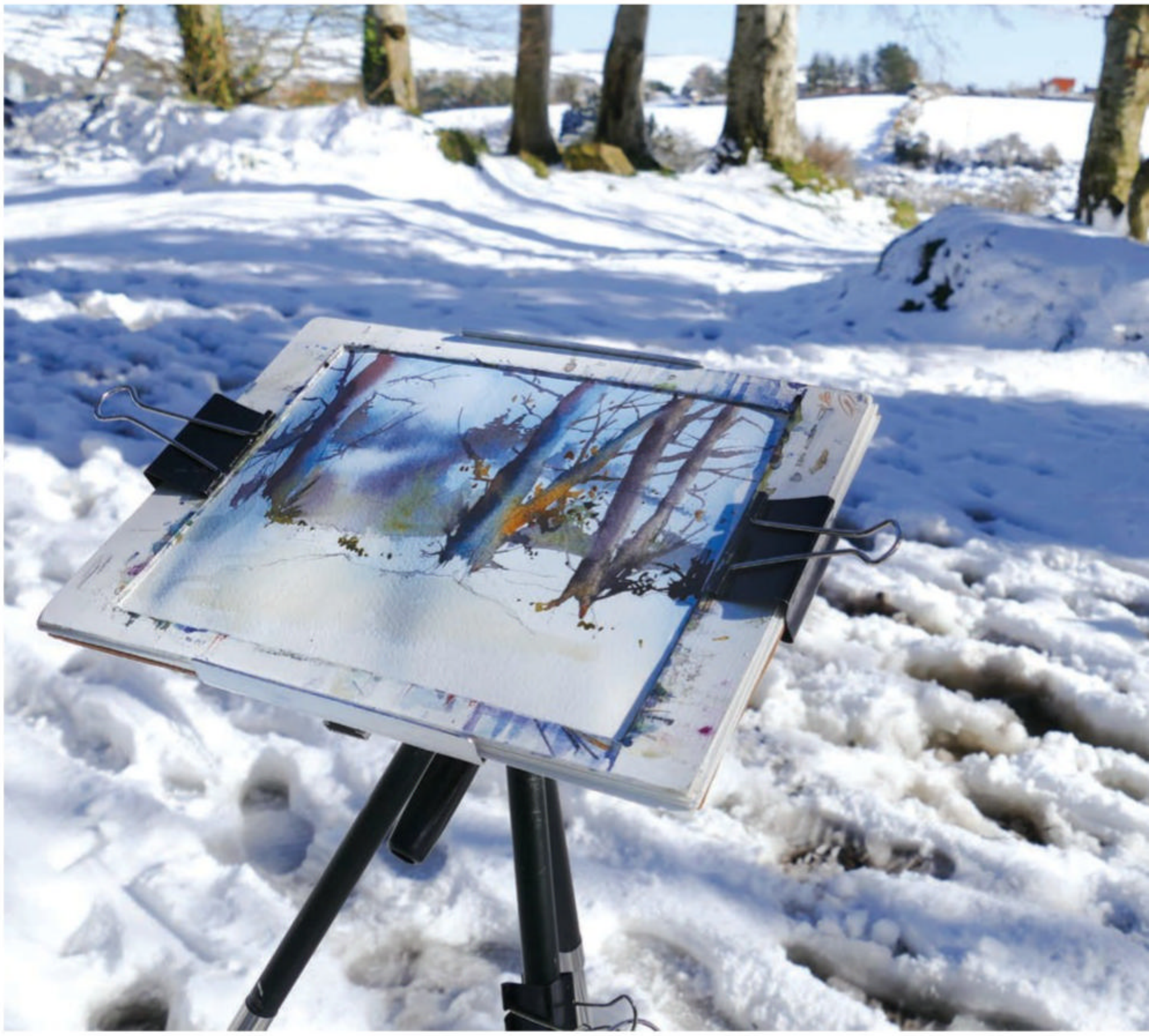
6 THE BRANCHES

Using the very tip of your rigger and the same Phthalo Blue/Warm Red mix, add the side branches, taking care to vary their shape and trying to make sure they get narrower as they move further away from the trunk. Keep a loose grip on the brush to ensure loose, more realistic-looking strokes. ▸



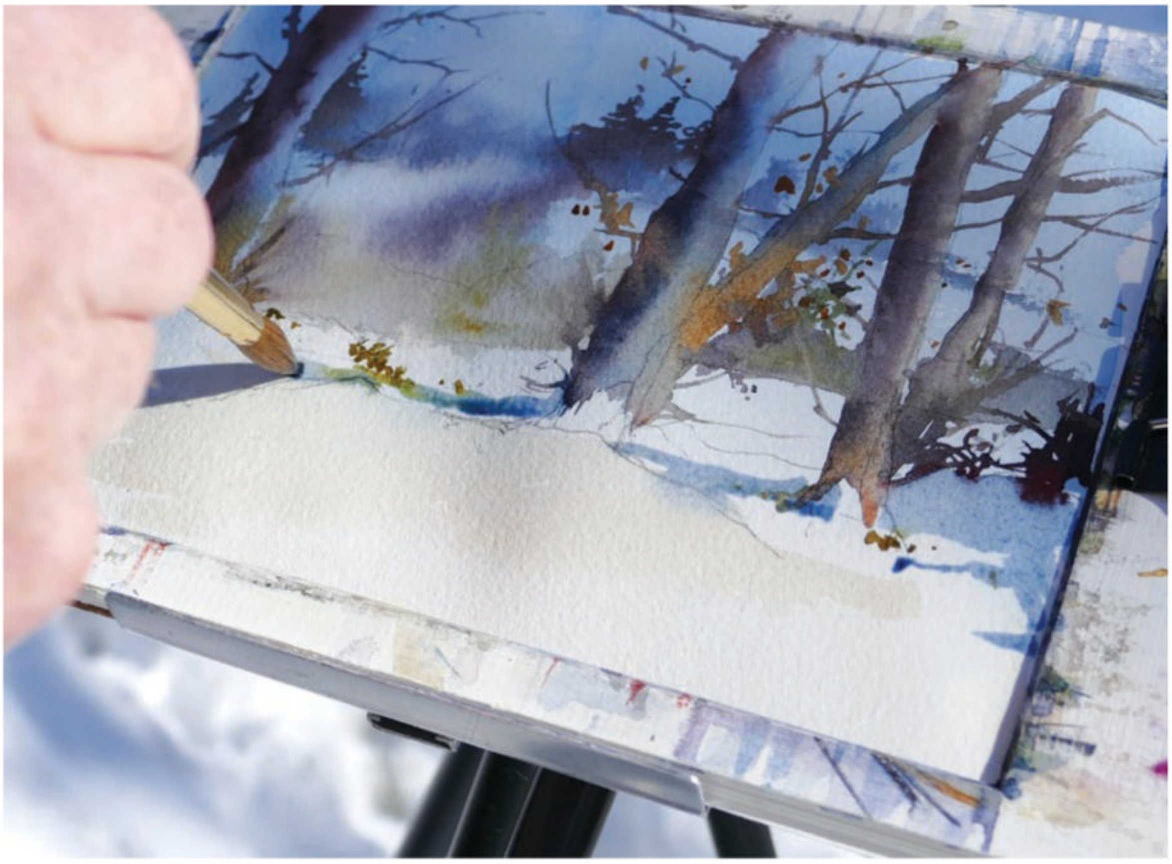
7 THE BEECH LEAVES ▲

Add a splash of pure Burnt Sienna with loose, leaf-like marks around one of the trunks and at the base of some of the branches; this gives that all-important touch of warmth to suggest the beech leaves.



8 ADJUSTING THE TONE ▶

Assess the tone of your foreground snow and adjust it slightly if you need to. As often happens, almost all of my warm tone in the first wash disappeared as it dried, so I reinforced this with a weak Burnt Sienna mix with a touch of Ultramarine to kill the orange. Add some touches of green mixed from Ultramarine and Warm Yellow to the base of the right-hand tree and on the ground between the trees, to add more warmth.

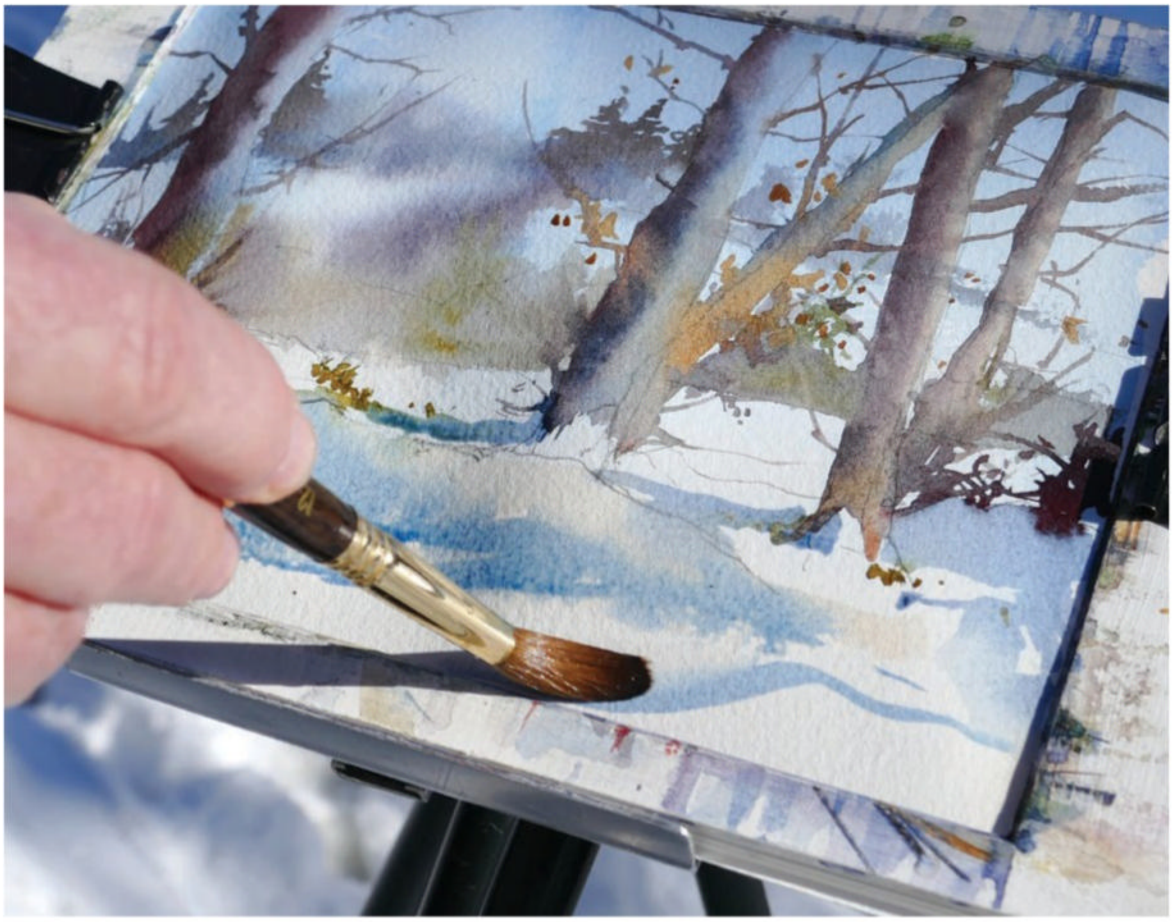


9 THE SHADOWS

It's time for the shadow now, and Cobalt Blue works a treat for snow shadows. Keeping in mind the soft undulations of the snow, try to echo that with your brushstrokes. Work around the bases of the trees, creating shadows cast by the trunks, too. Continue to work into the foreground, creating the illusion of drifted snow.

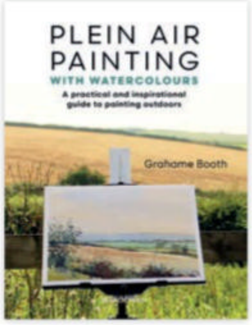
WHEN IT DOESN'T QUITE GO TO PLAN...

In my case, with all the dampness around, the shadows don't really work as well as I would have liked. At this point I have two options: either live with it or fiddle with it, trying to fix it. I almost always choose option one. On the rare occasions I take option two I always ruin it. It is much more important for your watercolour painting to be interesting and fresh.



10 FINAL DETAILS

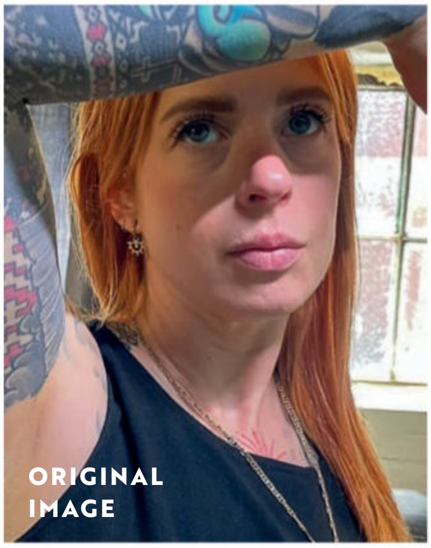
I add in a few final dabs of warmth to the middle and foreground using a variety of greens, to suggest greenery peeking through the snow. There really isn't much more I can do. The paper is too wet to continue, so it's time to head for home. I might add a few finishing touches back in the studio, hoping I won't get a call from the *en plein air* police!



This is an edited extract from Grahame Booth's book, *Plein Air Painting with Watercolours*, £15.99, available at Search Press ◻

Making the cut

Using cleverly constructed cutouts from out-of-date magazines, **PATRICK BREMER** created this colourful portrait. Give it a go and give new life to old paper



ORIGINAL IMAGE

PATRICK'S MATERIALS

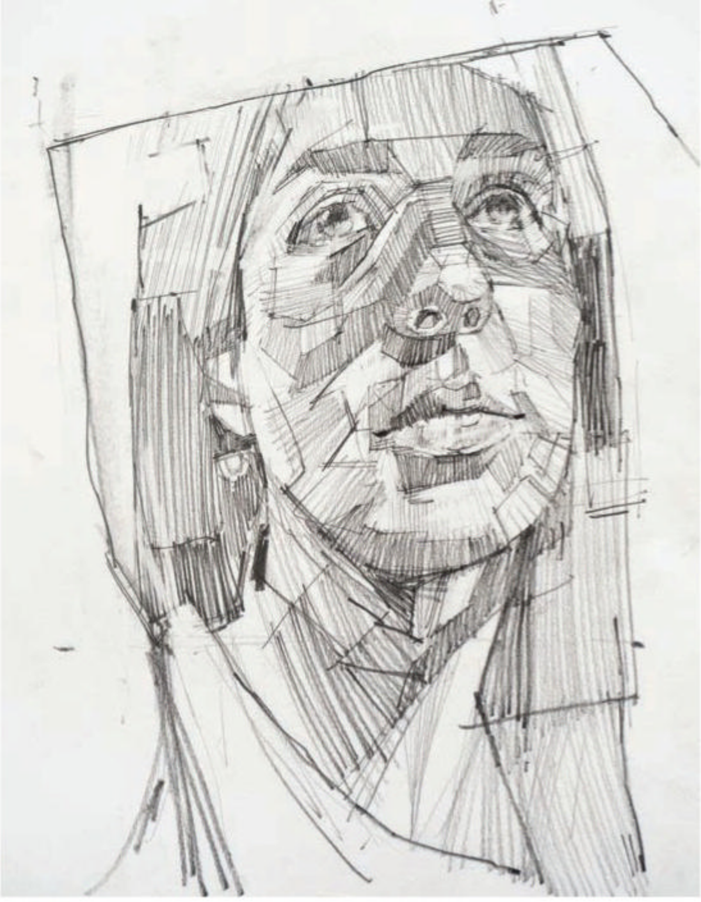
A pile of assorted magazines
Acrylic gel medium (I use Liquitex Professional gloss gel)
Scalpel and blades (Swann-Morton scalpel with 11P blades)
Paintbrushes
Acrylic paint
Carbon paper
Water tray
Cutting mat
Acrylic UV varnish (Lascaux Transparent UV Protect varnish)

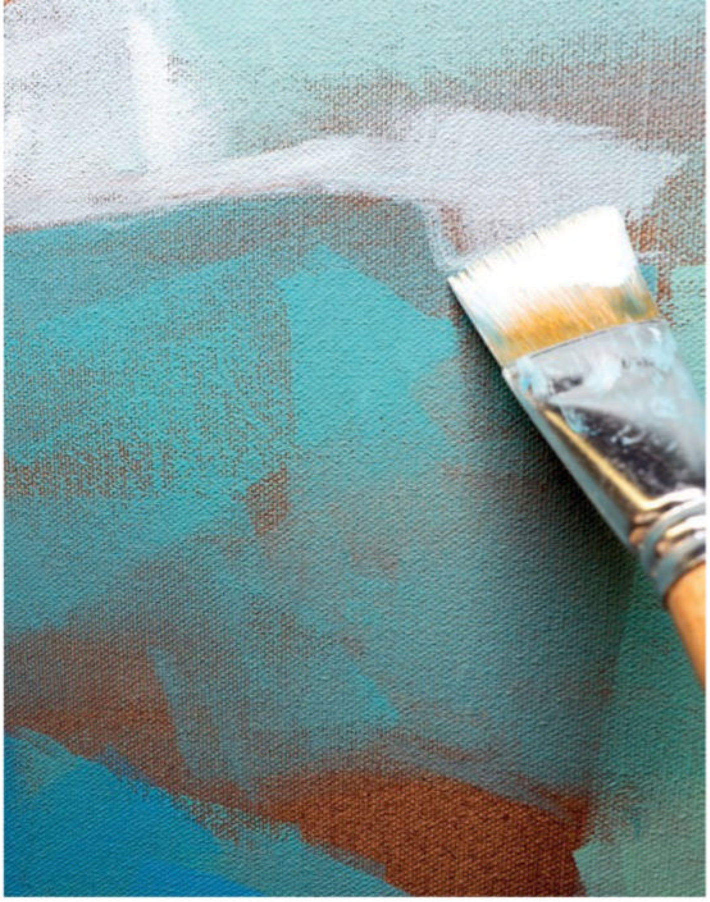
THIS PORTRAIT BEGAN LIFE as a pile of old magazines: pages full of colour, text and typography just waiting to be reimagined. I've always loved how collage can transform the ordinary into something completely new. You're not just making a likeness, you're weaving together fragments from different places to tell a fresh story.

I worked from a photo of the sitter, using it as a guide while hunting for just the right scraps to match each tone and shadow. Paper can't be mixed or blended like paint, so you have to search for the perfect hue. Don't worry if you make a mistake, simply stick a new piece over the top.

Finding materials is half the fun. Check your online marketplace of choice or head to a local car boot sale for a box of old magazines. Dig out that forgotten A-Z from the glovebox, photocopy a cherished letter or card, or use a wash with acrylic paint to colour some pages of music script.

Collage is not conducive to a tidy studio and that's part of the joy; scraps will end up everywhere and in those piles you'll spot unexpected gems that might just make the piece. You'll get distracted reading an article that may give you an idea for your next construction. By the end, the portrait becomes a lively patchwork of colour, texture and surprises, each fragment carrying its own little history before settling into its new role. ***patrickbremer.co.uk*** ▸



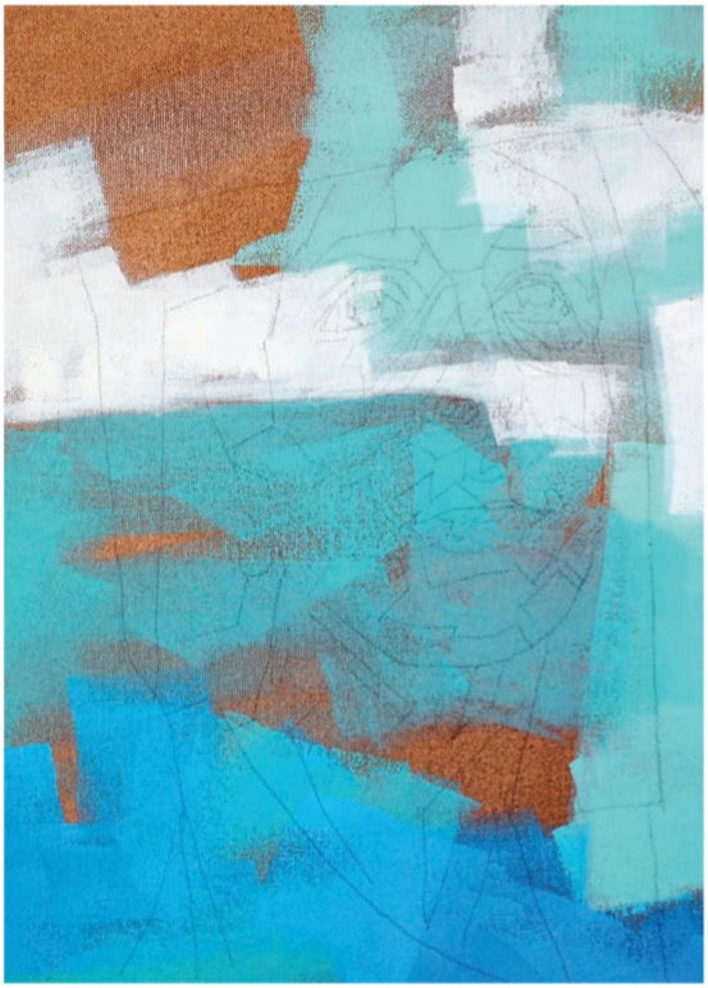


1 INITIAL SKETCH

When sketching for a collage, I'm always keeping in mind that the tones will be cut from flat pieces of paper and try to make my shading reflect that. Break it down into blocks of tone, looking for dark, mid and lights and don't get bogged down with any blending. I'll even outline those fragments in pencil as I go so I have an idea of which shapes to cut first.

2 PREPARE YOUR SUPPORT

I work on canvas, linen or wood panel. Here, I'm using canvas, stretched by hand rather than with pliers to avoid it being too tight (the glue in the finished piece will tighten it further, and on large works can even buckle the stretcher). I've primed it with white gesso (clear if using linen) and painted loose acrylic marks with a flat brush. These will provide an interesting background.

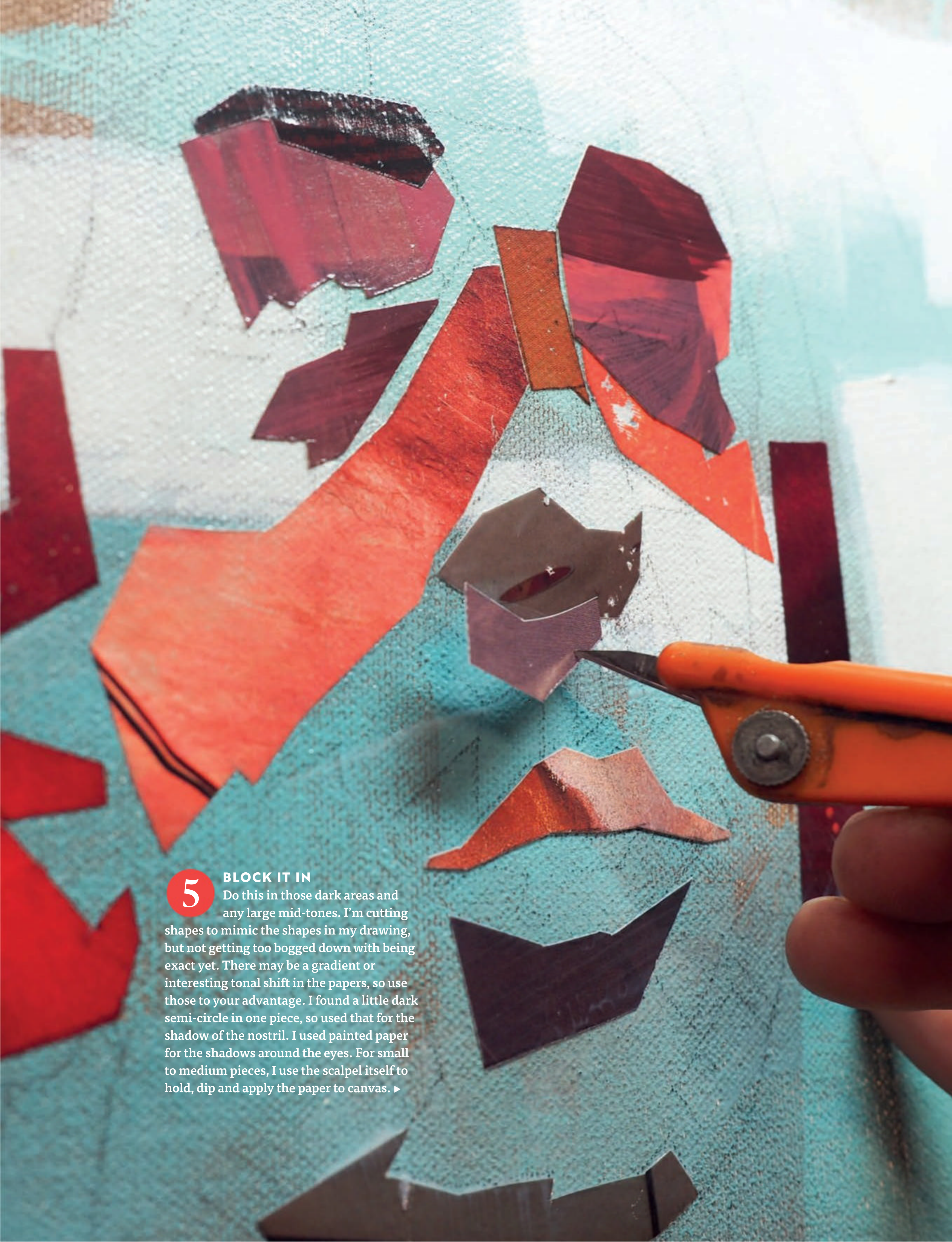


3 TRANSFER TO CANVAS AND START RIPPING

I use carbon paper to transfer my drawing onto the canvas, then start hunting for my first dark tones to block in shadows. Gather a whole pile before cutting anything and spread them out around you. Rather than using pictures of faces for skin tones, try images of wood, foliage, concrete, fabric, patterns or text instead. Flick through magazines, rip out the best pages, and keep variety in mind before you begin cutting and gluing.

4 GIVE IT A GOOD SOAK

It's important to relax the fibres in the paper before applying by soaking it in water to avoid wrinkling. I keep a water tray next to the easel to dunk each piece in before gluing it. Thin paper may only need a quick dip, thick glossy pages might want 30 seconds or so. Brush glue onto the canvas, lay the paper, then brush over the top to smooth it out. Keeping everything wet means I can move it around on the canvas and make adjustments before it sets.

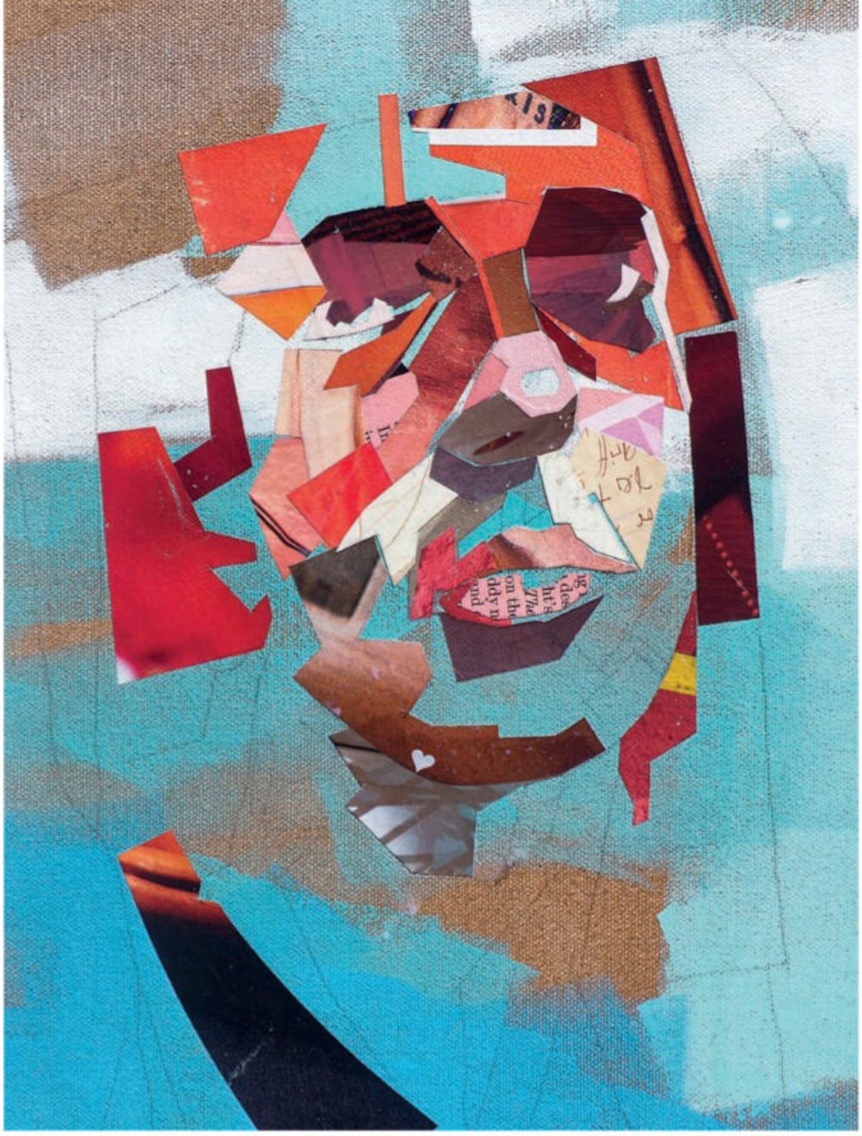


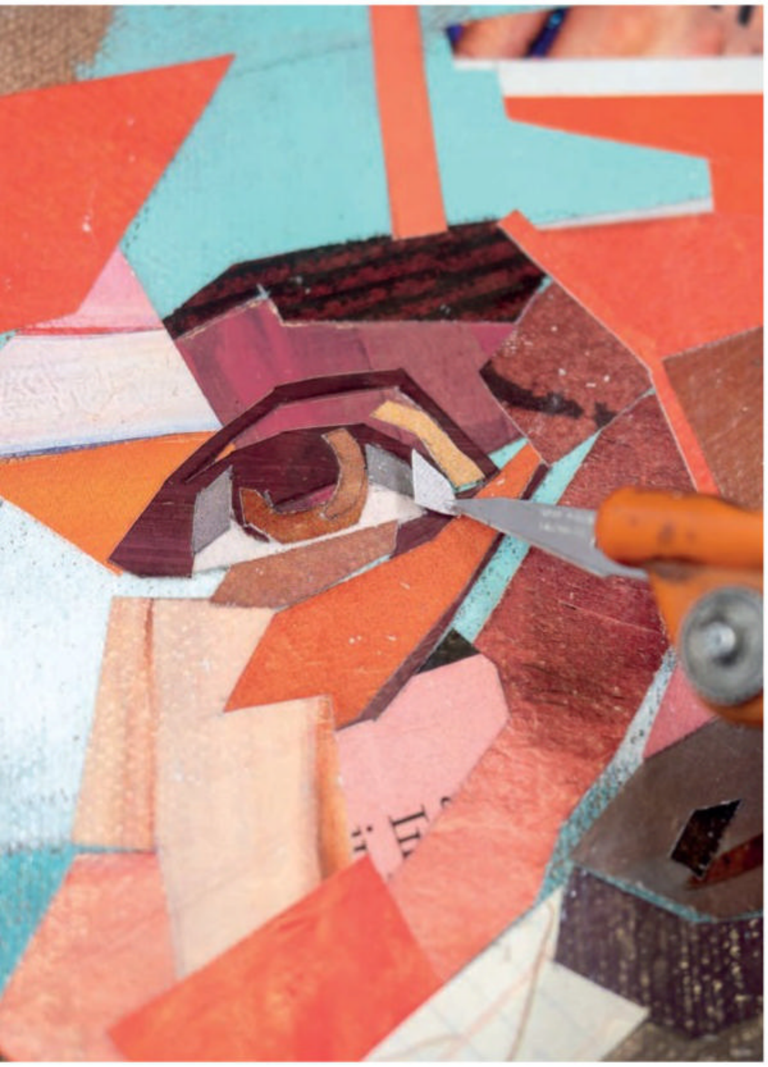
5 BLOCK IT IN

Do this in those dark areas and any large mid-tones. I'm cutting shapes to mimic the shapes in my drawing, but not getting too bogged down with being exact yet. There may be a gradient or interesting tonal shift in the papers, so use those to your advantage. I found a little dark semi-circle in one piece, so used that for the shadow of the nostril. I used painted paper for the shadows around the eyes. For small to medium pieces, I use the scalpel itself to hold, dip and apply the paper to canvas. ▸

6 BUILDING LAYERS ▶

Now, I can start using smaller pieces to get those mid-tones, and begin thinking about juxtaposing interesting patterns and images I find, to show a crease in the skin or flow of hair for example. I used a bit of text here to portray the fine creases in the bottom lip. If it starts getting too busy, I like to cut thin strips to outline the bridge of the nose, for example, so I don't get lost.



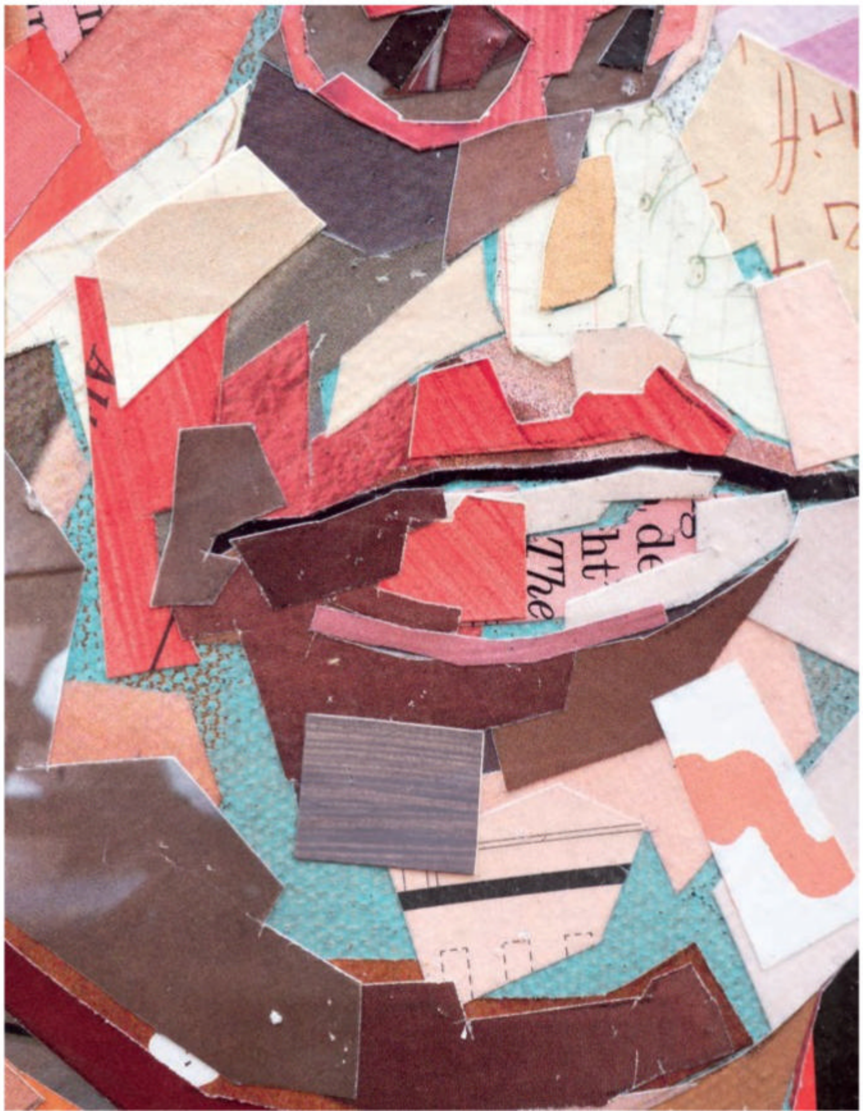


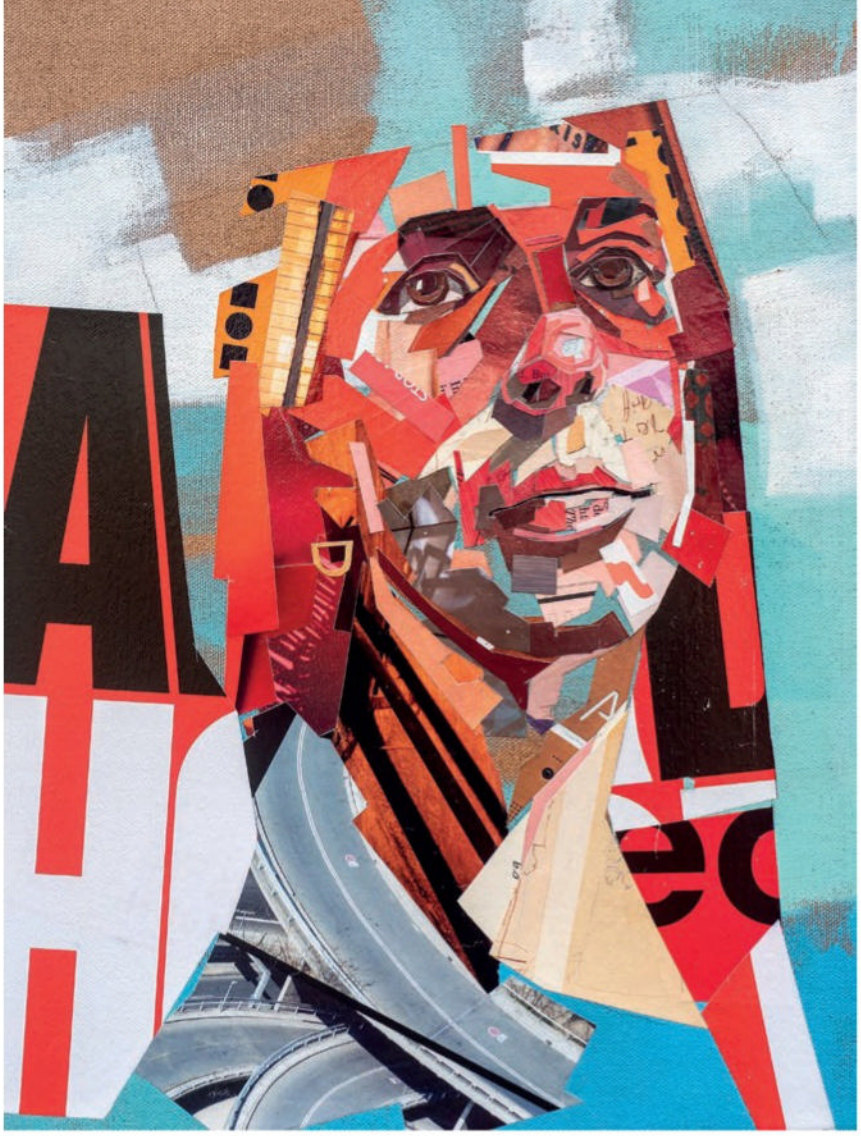
7 GETTING THE DETAILS RIGHT ▲

By this stage, I've already changed blades a couple of times, but I make sure to use a fresh one for the finer details. I also wasn't happy with the placement of the eye, so I went back over it with the original drawing and carbon paper and relocated it 5mm or so to the left. I cut a single piece of dark painted paper to show the top of the eyelid and pupil, and smaller semi-circular pieces of lighter tone on top for the iris. By building up layers you can start to capture fine details in the features to add personality and emotion to the piece.

8 FOCUS ON THE FEATURES ▶

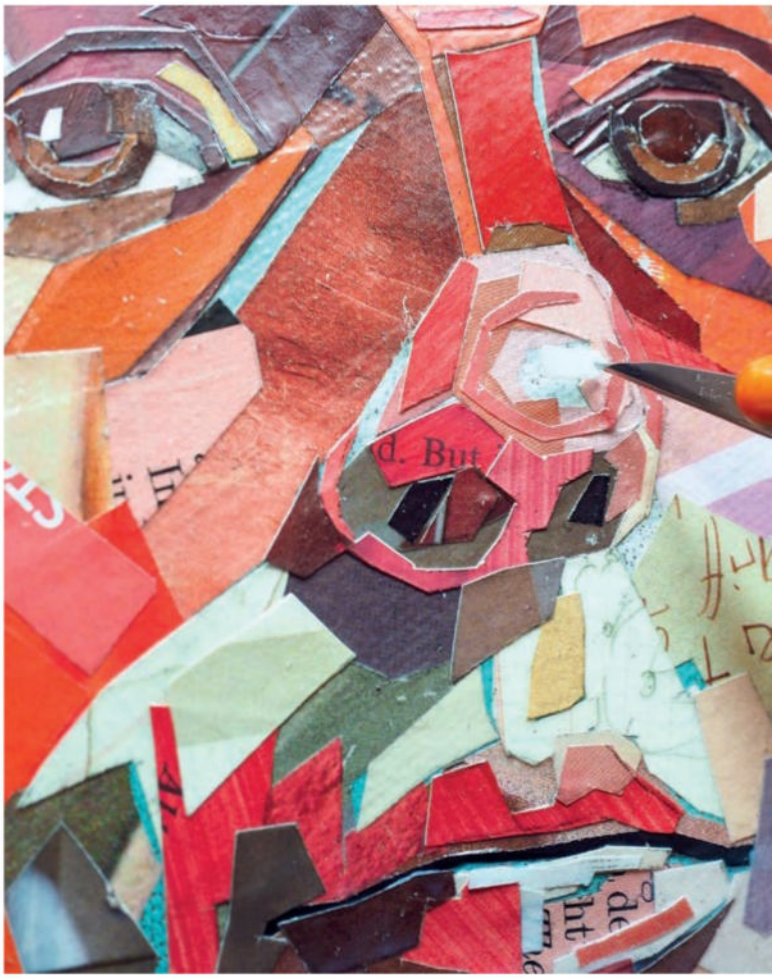
As with the eyes, the lips here took a bit of adjustment, trying and discarding some pieces, and layering up. I like to break up the fragments against the surrounding skin, continuing the same shadows from underneath the bottom lip onto the lip itself. Let the background colour help you; I left gaps showing the background and layers below to help add definition and structure.





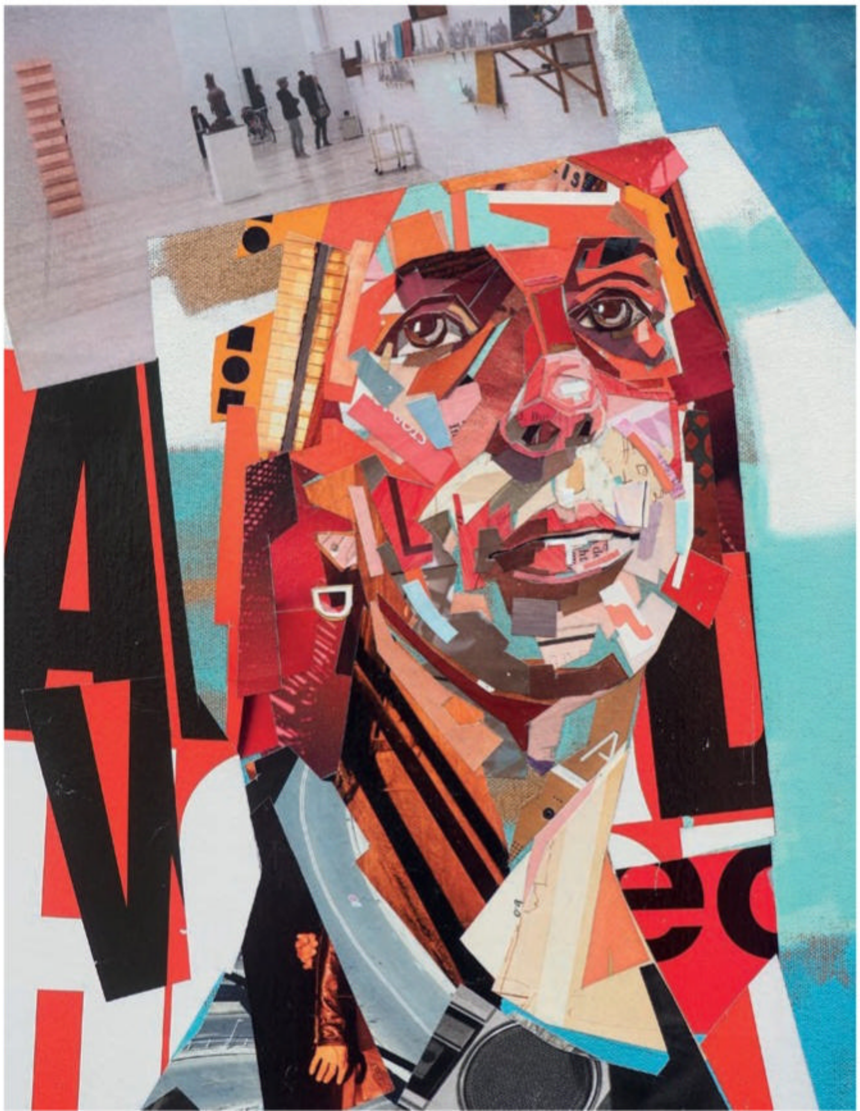
9 LEAN INTO THE ABSTRACT

We’re working in paper, which offers a unique opportunity to add graphics, text and images, so embrace that. I found some bold text to use on her arm on the left, some motorway roads for the wrinkles in her top, and dark shadows from a telegraph pole for the shadows on the left side of her neck. Often you only need to hint at an object rather than showing every detail, such as the little semi-circle cut out for the earring.



10 FINAL TOUCHES

I gave the piece another pass adding finishing touches and adding more highlights. The lips, whites of the eye and tip of the nose are all reflection points and a small piece of white can really help them stand out from the jumble around them. Throughout the piece your tonal range may have shifted, and what felt like darks are now mids compared to what is around them, so I made some adjustments with darker tones on the edge of the nostril and bottom lip. A circular piece of pink on the nose adds shape.



11 ALL CUT OUT

I decided to keep the paint behind for my background, so I touched up the turquoise and white with some fresh paint. I lightened the iris on both eyes slightly, as well as the ear and earring, and I think we’re there. To finish the piece, let it dry fully for a few days before using an acrylic UV protective varnish to protect it from fading. I use two coats of gloss Lascaux Transparent UV Protect varnish applied with a wide flat brush. ◻

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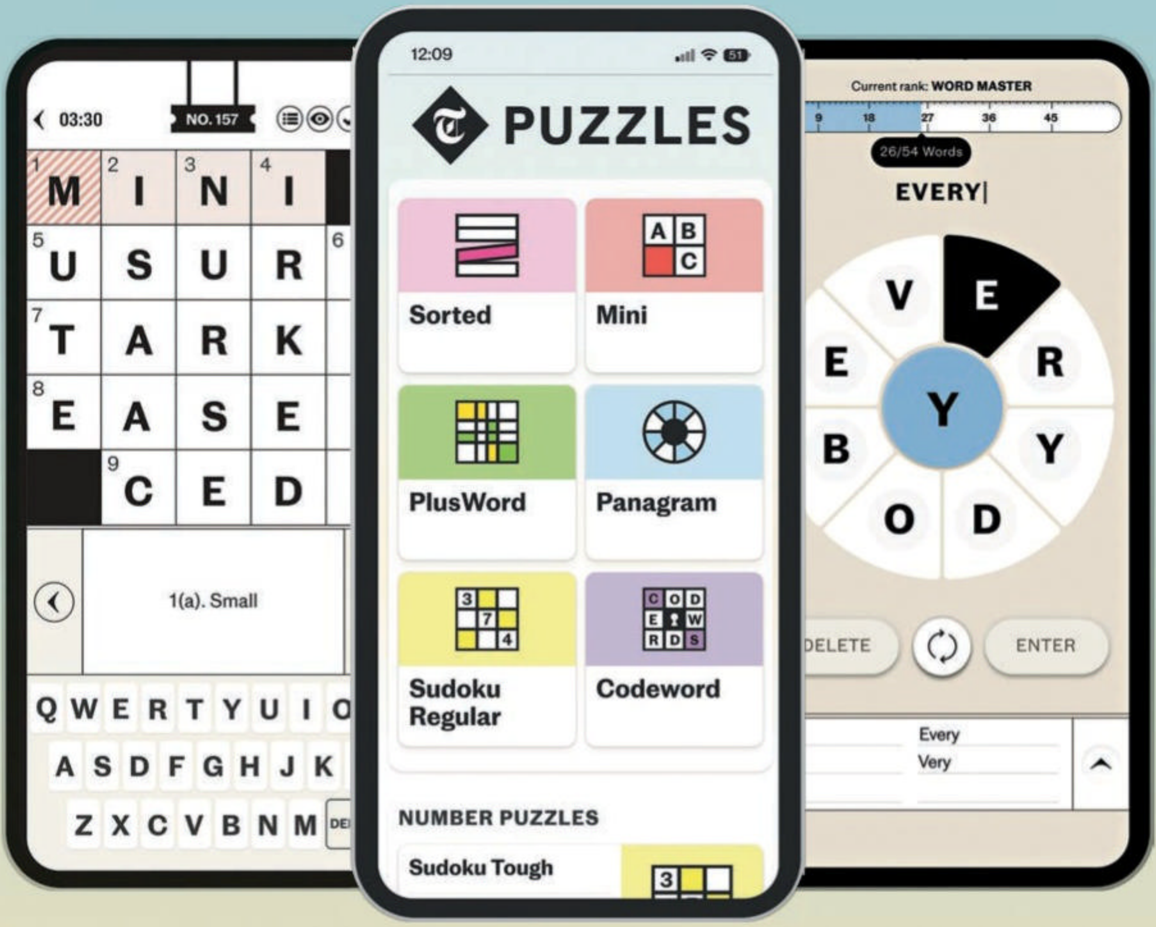
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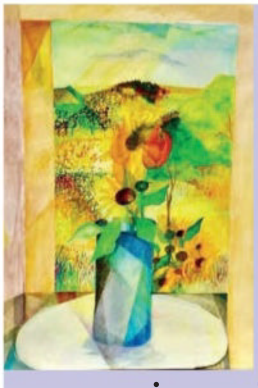
ARTISTS



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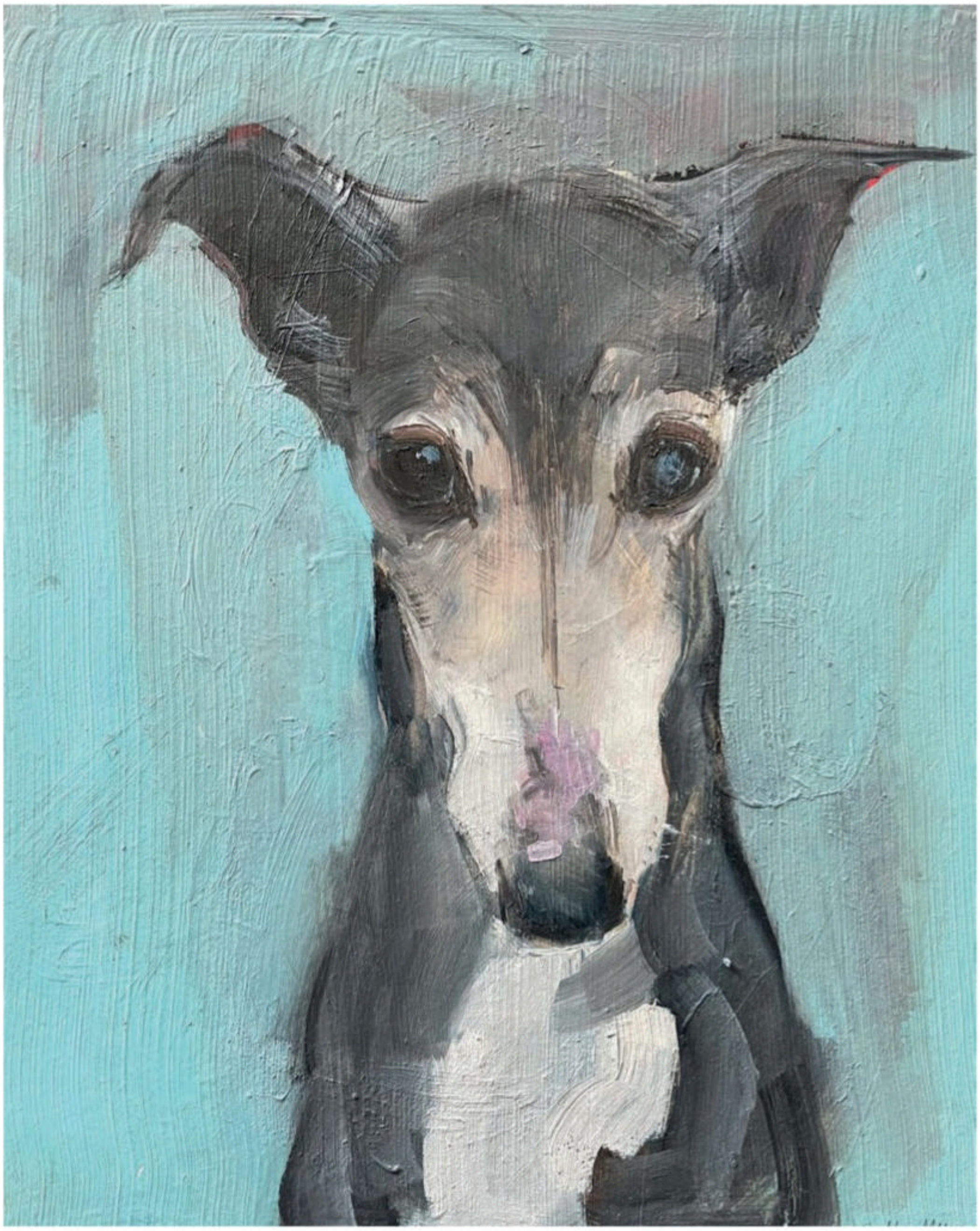

Lily,
oil on board,
20x26cm

Picture this

In every issue, we ask an artist to tell us about a painting that hold felling for them. This month, we speak to oil artist **SALLY MUIR**

This is a painting of my whippet, Lily, in old age. I knew I wouldn't have her for much longer, so it was a particularly poignant image for me. It was a moment at the end of her life, when I was preparing myself for not having her by my side all the time. I just painted her as I saw her. I love the mugshot portrait, so that you can meet the subject's eyes. I also love the hue; she had a coat that colour.

This style of painting is very typical of my practice. This particular painting is both typical and personal. I paint a lot of dogs, but Lily has a special place. I've painted and drawn her many, many times – sometimes they work and sometimes they don't – but it's all come together in this one. I don't think I could have improved it if I had fiddled with it. I've always tried to treat dog portraits as seriously as I treat human portraits; I try not to get too bogged down in details. I also try and get the essence of the dog or human without faffing around too much.

In this painting, I would like viewers to see the bond between humans and their dogs, and maybe recognise in it, their own bond with their dog. This was one of the last paintings in a long period of drawing and painting Lily; she was my muse for her whole life.

sallymuir.co.uk ◻

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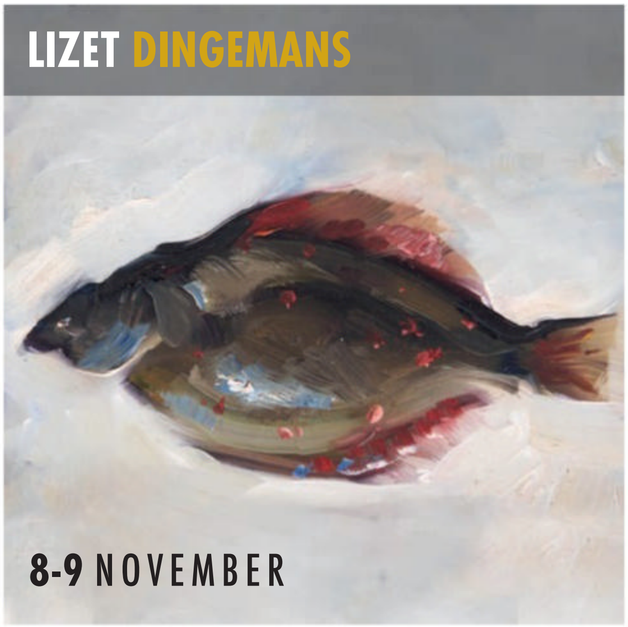
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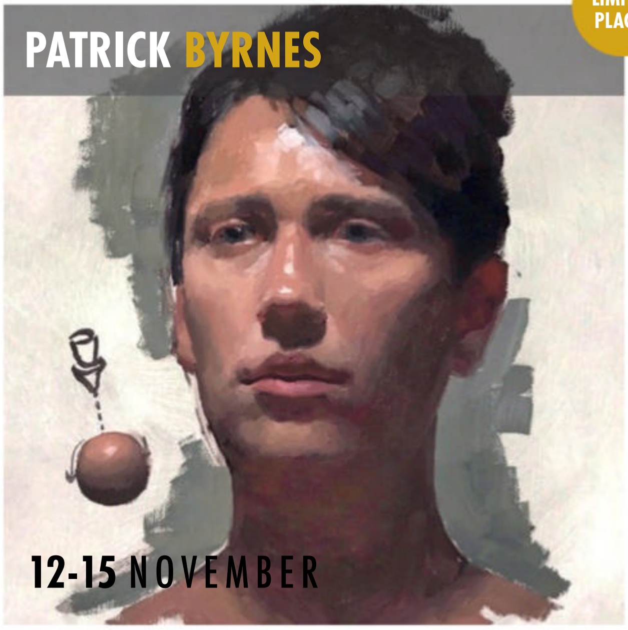
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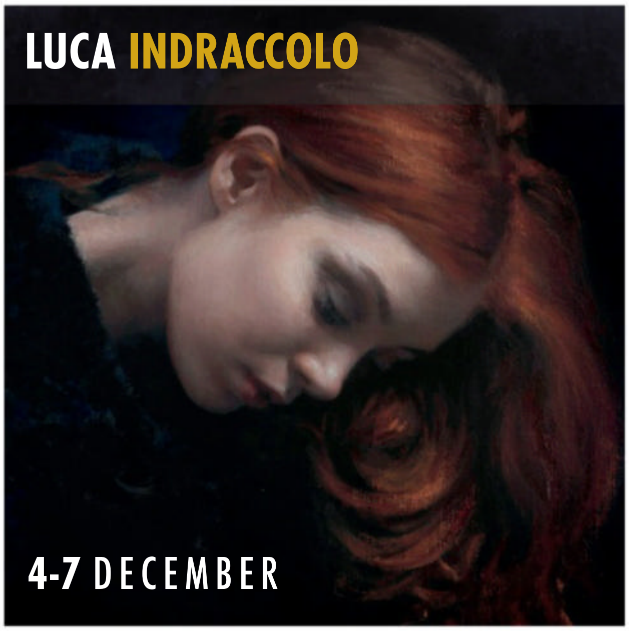
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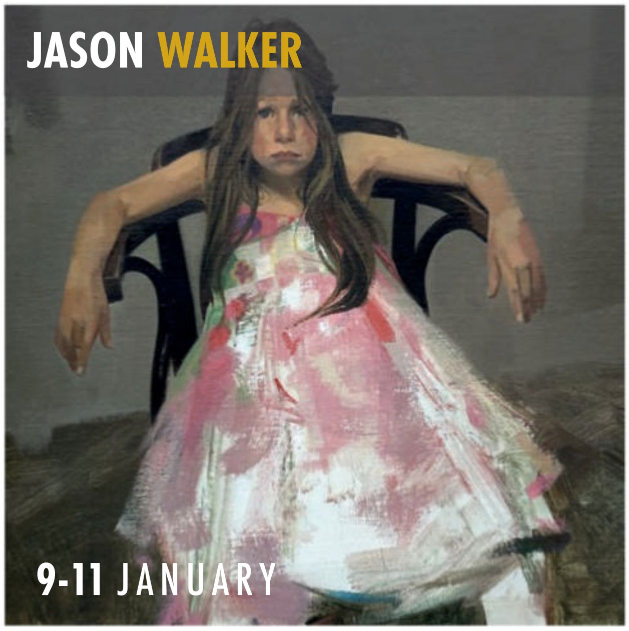
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